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The Hudson's Bay Company and its Support of Organized Religion in the Early Nineteenth Century

by

Derek Andrew Whitehouse

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

History

Department of History and Classics

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 1996

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Hudson's Bay Company and its Support of Organized Religion in the Early Nineteenth Century submitted by Derek Andrew Whitehouse in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

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Dec. 18, 1995

Abstract

Historians have often argued that the London Committee's decision to support the efforts of organized religion within its territories marked an epoch in the history of what was to become the Canadian West. These same historians, however, have often limited their discussion of the factors which led the London Committee to grant such support to a few passing comments. A detailed analysis of this topic confirms the general consensus that the London Committee granted support to the agents of organized religion within its territories in response to the contemporary environment in two geographical regions. Forces that were present in British society made it economically and politically expedient for the Hudson's Bay Company to grant such support. Forces that were present in the North-West facilitated the London Committee's decision.

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Abbreviations

(AEPRL.)	Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land.
(BP.)	Belleau Papers
(C.M.S.)	Church Missionary Society
(CMSA.)	Church Missionary Society Archives
(E.I.C.)	East India Company
(H.B.C.)	Hudson's Bay Company
(HBCA.)	Hudson's Bay Company Archives
(N.W.C.)	North West Company
(SP.)	Selkirk Papers

Chapter One

The early 1800s witnessed a change in the Hudson's Bay Company's policy toward organized religion in the North-West.[1] Most authors who have touched upon this subject, quite correctly, have attributed the cause of this change to contemporary social factors in Britain which raised economic and political concerns among the members of the Company's Governing Committee in London. In addition, the social and political environment in the North-West also played a role in bringing about that change and in determining the manner in which the Company's new policy would be expressed. While hypothesizing that these issues were indeed causal factors, these same authors have often failed to discuss at any length the question of how these factors came to be important to the London Committee. Moreover, previous authors have offered little in the way of documentation to

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[1]Although the focus of this study is the London Committee's change in attitude toward religion, at times it will be necessary and beneficial to note other policies of the Committee. For example, as will be seen in the following chapters, the Committee sometimes viewed the provision of educational and religious comfort for the inhabitants of its territories as complementary to its long term interest in trading furs. Based on geographical criteria, historian A.S. Morton distinguished between three North-Wests. A.S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71, 2nd ed., (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 1-3. For the purpose of this study, the North-West is defined as the area granted to the Hudson's Bay Company by its Charter and the licensed territories after 1858. Refer to "Charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670" as transcribed in Charters, Statutes, Orders in Council &c. Relating to the Hudson's Bay Company (London: Hudson's Bay Company, 1931), pp. 3-21. Refer also to ibid., p. 217.

support their hypotheses. This study will address these shortcomings in the literature.

Historian A.S. Morton has referred to the London Committee as the "governing machine" of the Hudson's Bay Company.[2] As such, the policies which the Committee established had a direct impact upon the Company's operations in the North-West. Similarly, changes that occurred in the social and economic context of the London metropolis had the potential to impact upon the hinterland of the North-West through the London Committee's policies and directives.

From the first days of the Company's charter, the London Committee had recommended to its factors and captains that religious observances be made at the factories in Rupert's Land and on board Company ships.[3] The Company provided Common Prayer Books, Bibles, and Sermons which

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[2]A.S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West, p. 62. Morton noted that the Governor, the Deputy-Governor, and seven other shareholders sat on the Committee. Ibid., p. 533. Refer also to Andrew Colvile to George Simpson, March 11, 1824 as transcribed in R. Harvey Flemming ed., Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1940), p. 96, footnote 1, and John McLean, John McLean's Notes of a Twenty Five Years Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory, ed. W.S. Wallace (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1932), pp. 4-5. The Hudson's Bay Company's organizational structure is laid out in its Charter. Refer to "Charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670" as transcribed in Charters, Statutes, Orders in Council &c. Relating to the Hudson's Bay Company, pp. 3-21.

[3]Refer to E.E. Rich ed., Hudson's Bay Copy Booke of Letters, Commissions, Instructions Outward, 1688-1696 (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1957), p. 38. Refer also to ibid., p. 48.

were, at least on some occasions, to be "distribute[d] gratis" among its servants.[4] Historian E.E. Rich noted, however, that the Hudson's Bay Company lacked "missionary fervour" at this time and that "[t]here was no attempt to convert the Indians or the Eskimos to a Christian, still less a sedentary, way of life."[5] Consequently, historians have often considered the changes in the Hudson's Bay Company's policies regarding organized religion within its territories that occurred during the first three decades of the nineteenth century as marking an epoch in the history of what was to become the Canadian West.[6]

Despite the Hudson's Bay Company's initial support for the provision of religious comfort for its servants, religion in the North-West prior to the early 1800s had been an expression of the interest of individual factors. As historian Michael Payne noted, "[s]ome officers took their

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[4]E.E. Rich ed., Hudson's Bay Copy Booke of Letters, Commissions, Instructions Outward, 1688-1696, p. 243. Refer also to ibid., p. 182.

[5]James Isham, James Isham's Observations on Hudson's Bay, 1743, ed. E.E. Rich (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1949), p. xxviii. It should be noted, however, that few protestant missions were undertaken until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Elie Halévy, England in 1815, with an Introduction by Asa Briggs (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1987), p. 389. This point will be elaborated upon in Chapters Three and Four.

[6]Refer to John Webster Grant, Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 116-118 and Frits Pannekoek, The Fur Trade and Western Canadian Society Canadian Historical Association Booklet 43 (1987), pp. 21-22.

religious responsibilities seriously, but for the most part Sunday was just a day of rest."[7] In the two decades following 1806, however, the London Committee researched, implemented, and solidified several new policies including the provision of organized religion to ameliorate the spiritual condition of the inhabitants of its territories. By the mid-1820s, the Hudson's Bay Company was providing monetary and technical assistance to the efforts of both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic clergy in the region.

What, then, brought about this change in policy? Most historians have argued that issues in Great Britain, such as Evangelicalism, anti-monopoly sentiments, humanitarianism, and increasing missionary zeal, as well as factors in the North-West, such as the founding of the Red River settlement, necessitated a change in the London Committee's attitude toward religion. In the early nineteenth century, for example, some individuals who were supporters of Evangelicalism, including Nicholas Garry, Andrew Colvile, and Benjamin Harrison, were elected to the London Committee.[8] Although those Committee members who were

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[7]Michael Payne, The Most Respectable Place in the Territory: Everyday Life in Hudson's Bay Company Service, York Factory, 1788-1870 (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1989), pp. 113-114. Payne also notes the earlier religious policies of the Company therein.

[8]Benjamin Harrison and Nicholas Garry were elected to the London Committee in 1807 and 1817 respectively. A.N. Thompson, "Expansion of the Church of England in Rupert's Land from 1820-1839 under the Hudson's Bay Company and the Church Missionary Society" (Ph.D. diss., University of

moved by Evangelicalism were not dominant in number, they were, nevertheless, an influential force.[9] Indeed, historian E.E. Rich has argued that the London Committee was "handicapped" and "[h]amstrung" by the "high-minded principles" of this minority.[10]

Those Committee members who embraced Evangelicalism were well positioned to demonstrate to the rest of the Board the economic and political import of the changing social conditions in Great Britain and how current Company policies could be perceived unfavourably in this new environment. Andrew Colvile, for example, expressed to Governor George Simpson his concerns over the growing anti-monopoly sentiment in Great Britain:

> It is incumbent on the Company if there was no settlement [at Red River] to have a chaplain in their country & at least to allow missions to be established at proper places for the conversion of the Indians, indeed it w^{d} be extremely impolitic in the present temper & disposition of the public in this Country to show any unwillingness to

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Cambridge, 1962), p. 413 and p. 404. Refer also to Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA.) A.1/49. Minute Books, November 25, 1807 and HBCA. A.1/51. Minute Books, November 26, 1817. Andrew Colvile was elected to the London Committee in 1810. A.S. Morton, History of the Canadian West, p. 536. Refer also to HBCA. A.1/50. Minute Books, November 28, 1810.

[9]Refer to E.E. Rich, The History of the Hudson's Bay Company, (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1959), II, 344-5, and A.S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West, pp. 631-2.

[10]E.E. Rich, History of the Hudson's Bay Company, II, 345.

assist in such an object.[11]

The London Committee desired that the situation in the North-West reflect positively on the Company.

Critics often couched their attacks on the Company's monopoly in language that expressed social and humanitarian concern. Joseph Robson, for example, who was an early critic of the Company, noted that, because of the London Committee's desire to continue to reap great profits, the Indian peoples in the North-West were being treated cruelly and left in "ignorance."[12] The economic activities of the H.B.C. and the decisions of the London Committee thus often were intertwined with social considerations, and while humanitarian principles were important to some Committee members, economic concerns were of importance to the entire Committee.[13] Within the context of early nineteenth

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[11]Andrew Colvile to George Simpson, 11 March 1824 as transcribed in Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson's Journal (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), p. 205.

[12]Joseph Robson, An Account of Six Years Residence in Hudson's Bay, From 1733 to 1736, and 1744 to 1747 (London: J. Payne and J. Bouquet, 1752; reprint, London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1954), pp. 74-75. For an introduction to the Parliamentary hearings of 1749 and to the "many petitions from all over the country . . . praying that the trade might be thrown open," refer to E.E. Rich, History of the Hudson's Bay Company, I, 579-585.

[13]In characterizing the H.B.C., historian A.S. Morton noted that "[t]he concern was very conservative and cautious in its business methods; its stockholders were for the most part rich men, and one would judge that they regarded the money put into the concern as an investment; they were not of those who seek to amass a fortune quickly, but men who were satisfied with a return satisfactory and steady." A.S.

century British society, and in the face of forces such as Evangelicalism, humanitarianism, missionary zeal, and anti-monopoly sentiments, the London Committee realized that it would be politically and economically inexpedient for the H.B.C. not to support the agents of organized religion within its territories.

A second series of factors also influenced the Hudson's Bay Company's decision to support the efforts of organized religion in the North-West. In noting that the denominational makeup of Red River was founded largely on Roman Catholicism, Samuel Gale, Lord Selkirk's counsel, wrote that "public utility & the interests of humanity" supported the contention put forward by some of the Métis in the region that "some Priests of the Religion of their fathers should become residents in that country to instruct them in the principles of Christianity." Gale went on to note that a person of the cloth would "introduce permanently the principles of peace & order into regions so extensive & remote, & deffuse [*sic*] the light & consolations of religion."[14]

Morton, "The Business Methods and the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company," Canadian Historical Association Review (1938): 137.

[14]Samuel Gale to William Coltman, January 1, 1818 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions: 1815-1827 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1942), pp. 19-20. As will be elaborated upon shortly, although Lord Selkirk was not a member of the London Committee, he did hold a large quantity of Company stock. He was also a brother-in-law to both Andrew Colvile

Other contemporaries also had commented upon the "temper and the total want of principle" of the inhabitants of both Red River and of the North-West as a whole.[15] In this context, not only the political and social leaders of the colony, but also the European settlers, the Métis, and the Canadian freemen perceived religion to be one of several possible methods to better the environment of the North-West.[16] Furthermore, following the signing of the Deed

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and John Halkett, and was instrumental in bringing organized religion to the North-West. Consequently, an understanding of his motives and his activities will be of value to this study.

[15]Robert Semple to Lord Selkirk as quoted in E.H. Oliver ed., The Canadian North-West, its Early Development and Legislative Records (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), I, 197. Refer also to Samuel Hull Wilcocke, A Narrative of Occurrences in the Indian Countries of North America Since the Connexion of the Right Hon. The Earl of Selkirk with the Hudson's Bay Company, and his Attempt to Establish a Colony on the Red River (New York: James Eastburn and Co., 1817; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), pp. 50-54, and Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement: its Rise, Progress and Present State with Some Account of the Native Races and its General History to the Present Day (London: Smith and Elder, 1856; reprint, Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1972), pp. 172-3.

[16]Indeed, historian C.J. Jaenen has noted that "Selkirk saw the presence of priests at Red River as a force for law and order which might stay the hand of the Canadian *engagés* of the North West Company." C.J. Jaenen, "Foundations of Dual Education at Red River 1811-1834," Transactions of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Series 3 (1964-1965): 41. For Selkirk's attitude in this regard, refer to Lord Selkirk, "A Sketch of the British Fur Trade, in The Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk, ed. J.M. Bumsted (Winnipeg: Manitoba Record Society, 1988), II, 79. Refer also to J. Orin Oliphant, "George Simpson and the Oregon Missions," Pacific Historical Review 6, September (1937): 228-229. Judicial and military options for improving the social and political environments in the region were also considered. Selkirk Papers, (SP.) Lord Selkirk to William

Poll in 1821, the numerous fur trade dependents and newly laid-off individuals inhabiting the North-West contributed to a setting in which religion constituted a valuable tool of control and instruction. As A.S. Morton noted, "[t]he Governor and Committee . . . . looked on religion and education as calculated to train the people to an orderly life and as assisting the Company in its task of ruling a fretful realm."[17] Thus, while the London Committee's decision to support the efforts of organized religion was primarily a response to forces that were present in contemporary British society, the context in the contemporary North-West facilitated that decision by providing an environment which the London Committee believed would benefit from the proliferation of Christianity.

Much has been written about the Hudson's Bay Company in the early nineteenth century. While many authors have touched upon the Company's change in policy regarding religion, they have often discussed in only a cursory manner the causal factors which were responsible for this change. While they have acknowledged the historical significance of the Company's support for missionary labours in the North-West, few historians have discussed at any length the reasons that were behind the London Committee's change in policy.

Wilberforce, July, 22, 1819, pp. 6339 ff.

[17]A.S. Morton, History of the Canadian West, p. 635.

T.C.B. Boon's work The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies provides an excellent illustration of this shortcoming. Given the title of Boon's work, a reader might expect that some discussion would be devoted to the factors which led the H.B.C. to grant support to Anglican missionary efforts. In his most direct reference to this topic, however, Boon merely noted the "benevolent feelings" of the Hudson's Bay Company.[18]

Similarly, in his work The Most Respectable Place in the Territory, Michael Payne noted that the "appointment of John West as Chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1820 was part of a major shift in Company policy."[19] Payne, however, did little to explore, or even mention, the factors that were responsible for bringing about that shift; he merely acknowledged that "[d]eciphering the attitude of the Hudson's Bay Company towards missionary activity is no easy matter."[20] Sanford Harvey further noted that "[w]ith the reorganization of the Company in 1810, official recognition of the need for missionary work in Rupert's Land appeared." By way of an explanation for the origin of the change, however, Harvey noted only that "[t]hree influential men on the Committee, who had humanitarian principles, Nicholas

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[18]T.C.B. Boon, The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), p. 3.

[19]Michael Payne, The Most Respectable Place in the Territory, p. 114.

[20]Ibid., p. 184, endnote 41.

Garry, Andrew Colville [*sic*] and Benjamin Harrison, apparently tried to improve social conditions in the West."[21]

While some historians have chosen to omit any discussion of the factors which were responsible for the change in the London Committee's policy regarding religion, other authors have offered abbreviated analyses. Frederick Merk, for example, noted that social and humanitarian issues which had the potential to impact negatively upon the business of the Company influenced the decisions reached by the London Committee in the 1810s and 1820s regarding the place that organized religion was to occupy in the North-West. Arguing along Turnerian lines, Merk maintained that the harsh wilderness of the North-West bred the belief among the Company's employees in the region that a chaplain would be both detrimental and a nuisance to the fur trade. He suggested, however, that "in London there was a kindlier soil" with respect to the prospect of organized religion entering the H.B.C.'s territories.[22]

Merk argued that true humanitarian concern, as expressed by several members of the London Committee, was complemented by an awareness that some of the attacks that were being made on the Company's monopolistic position were

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[21]Sanford Harvey, "The Part Played by the Hudson's Bay Company in Western Canadian Education, 1821-1869" (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1955), p. 36.

[22]Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire, p. xxxii.

based upon the premise that the H.B.C. was exploiting and degrading the Indian peoples. Merk suggested, however, that the monopoly itself "was a support to humane councils . . . [because it] provid[ed] a permanent stake in the Indian country . . . and justif[ied] as a matter of enlightened self-interest a policy of conserving and strengthening Indian life."[23]

Merk ultimately concluded that the London Committee changed its attitude toward religion as a result of social and economic considerations. He wrote that "London thus nurtured a policy of humane moderation in the fur trade as naturally as the American environment stimulated exploitation."[24] For Merk, London's paternalism triumphed over St. Louis' individualism, and social concerns, rather than economic ones, were the primary causal factors of the London Committee's change in policy regarding organized religion. Merk's discussion of this topic, however, was limited to less than two pages of text and little in the way of documentary support was provided.

Almost half a century later, John S. Galbraith presented an argument which bore some similarity to Merk's thesis. Galbraith noted that the London Committee was motivated both by humanitarian concerns and by the desire to

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[23]Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire, pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

[24]Ibid., p. xxxiii.

avoid a repeat of the Parliamentary hearings which had been called in the mid-eighteenth century to examine the contentions of those groups and individuals who were opposed to the Company's monopoly. Galbraith, however, saw profit as the driving consideration in the formation of the Company's policies. He argued that the H.B.C. existed to make money from furs; this, in turn, implied some concern for the Indian trappers who were a vital economic link in the fur trade. Thus, the conversion of the Indian peoples to Christianity would help to address concerns that were being expressed by some elements of the London Committee regarding the welfare of the Indian populations; it would also counter some of the arguments that were being forwarded by opponents of the Company's monopoly.[25] Galbraith's analysis of the factors which were behind the Committee's change in attitude toward religion encompassed little more than one page, and he too offered little in the way of documentary support for his conclusions.

J. Orin Oliphant noted that the London Committee's attitude toward religion may have been influenced on two fronts. While discussing the subject in a single paragraph,

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[25]John S. Galbraith, The Little Emperor: Governor Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), p. 61. Several decades earlier, A.S. Morton had echoed Galbraith's understanding. Morton noted that the London Committee was "a serious sober-minded cautious group of men, not unconscious of the commercial value of honesty, of good conduct, and even of religion." A.S. Morton, "The Business Methods and the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company," p. 140.

Oliphant noted that either the Committee may have been touched by the rising humanitarian and Evangelical movements that were occurring in contemporary Great Britain or that it may have realized that its future profits rested with the welfare of the Indian peoples. Apart from the impact that these business and philanthropic influences may have had on individual Committee members, Oliphant suggested that it was "unlikely that the Honorable [*sic*] Governor and Committee, desirous as they were of gaining and holding public approval of their policies, would fly in the face of an exuberant missionary spirit, or disregard a rising sentiment in England for humanitarian reform."[26] Thus, Oliphant saw economic concerns brought on by social considerations as the primary motivators in the Hudson's Bay Company's change in attitude toward religion. He concluded that the London Committee adopted a position of "enlightened self-interest, taking notice of public opinion on the one hand and of the conservation of Company resources on the other."[27]

A.N. Thompson also suggested that "[w]hat had altered the Company's policy by 1822 was the changed climate of British public opinion. In England, monopolies had never been popular. They stood to be even less so if they flew in

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[26]J. Orin Oliphant, "George Simpson and the Oregon Missions," p. 222.

[27]Ibid., pp. 222-3.

the face of rising humanitarianism."[28] Thus, Thompson suggested that it was in the economic interest of the Hudson's Bay Company to change its policy regarding organized religion in the North-West. Thompson noted, however, that the establishing of a Protestant mission in Rupert's Land in the early nineteenth century "was prompted in large measure by the needs of [the] Red River settlement."[29] Once again, however, while noting that "[t]he very marked change in the Company's attitude toward Christian Missions is significant," Thompson discussed in a single page of text the factors which he believed were key to bringing about this change.[30]

Thus, aside from a few discrepancies concerning the main versus the secondary factors that lay behind the Hudson's Bay Company's London Committee's change in attitude toward religion, the historiography in this area of study has remained generally consistent. Those authors who have analyzed this change have tended to view economic and political considerations which arose out of social concerns in Britain and the North-West as being the key causal factors in bringing about the London Committee's new policy.

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[28]A.N. Thompson, Expansion of the Church of England, p. vi. Refer also to E.E. Rich, History of the Hudson's Bay Company, I, 583.

[29]A.N. Thompson, Expansion of the Church of England, p. iv.

[30]Ibid., p. v.

As Gerald Friesen noted, "the British directors always kept a firm hand on administrative matters . . . . [Indeed, the North-West remained] subject to the oversight of the great capitalists of the City."[31] For these "great capitalists," the social climate in Great Britain and the North-West made it economically and politically logical for them to support the efforts of organized religion.

As noted previously, many historians have held that the opening of the North-West to the direct influence of organized Christian religion marked an important epoch in the history of that region. These same authors, however, have tended to restrict their analyses of the underlying causes to a few passing comments. It is thus a valuable historical exercise to examine in depth the question of why the Hudson's Bay Company's London Committee changed its attitude toward religion.

A survey of the primary sources and secondary literature suggests that the arguments of earlier authors as to the causes of the London Committee's change in attitude toward religion were, for the most part, correct. Social conditions in the London metropolis, and in Great Britain as a whole, made it an economic and political necessity for the London Committee to support the efforts of organized religion in the hinterland of the North-West. In addition,

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[31]Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 87.

the social and political context in the North-West facilitated the Company's decision by providing an environment which the London Committee believed would benefit from the entry of missionaries and the proliferation of Christianity.

It is of note that while one of the main shortcomings in the secondary literature pertaining to this subject area is that it offers little in the way of expansive or detailed analysis, many of these same secondary works also offer little in the way of documentary support for the conclusions that are drawn within them. A survey of the primary resources, however, reveals that a large amount of documentation concerning the decisions of the Hudson's Bay Company regarding religion and other related issues, as well as the factors which influenced the Company's policies in this regard, does exist.

An extensive body of documents concerning the London Committee's policies and attitudes toward religion and other related issues, such as literacy and education, can be found in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA.). While the H.B.C.'s Minute Books provide a comprehensive overview of the decisions that the London Committee reached, they do not record the discussions that were undertaken in determining those resolutions. The Correspondence Books and the Governor's Records, however, do provide details as to the personal and organizational motivations that lay behind the

change in policy that is under discussion here.

Similarly, the records of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) contain much information regarding the combined efforts of both it and the Hudson's Bay Company to bring organized Christian religion to the inhabitants of the North-West. Although the documents which concern the above geographical region do not pre-date the 1820s, they do include a useful body of correspondence between the C.M.S. and the Hudson's Bay Company and between the C.M.S. and the clergymen that it sponsored in the North-West.

Grace Lee Nute's Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions: 1815-1827 provides valuable information about the establishment of the Roman Catholic missions in the North-West. As the Roman Catholic mission in Red River was established before that of the Protestant John West, correspondence among the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec, Lord Selkirk, and members of the London Committee yields useful insight into the H.B.C.'s attitude toward religion in the early nineteenth century.

The Selkirk Papers (SP.) in the National Archives of Canada also contain a wealth of information concerning the founding and growth of the Red River colony. Included in these documents is correspondence to and from Lord Selkirk, the British Government, the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Quebec, the London Committee, and employees of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company who were living in

the North-West. J.M. Bumsted's edition of The Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk: 1810-1820 also contains information that is relevant to this study. Many of the works therein lend insight into the actions of both Selkirk and the London Committee.

The Belleau Collection (BP.) in the Assumption Abbey Archives, Richardton, North Dakota contains numerous documents dating from 1815. Included among the earlier papers and correspondence are some of the writings of Lord Selkirk, Bishop Plessis, the inhabitants of the Red River Settlement, and Fathers Provencher and Dumoulin. Consequently, the Collection is of significant importance in providing an understanding of the development and influence of the early Roman Catholic endeavours in Red River.

Another valuable primary resource is the Missionary Register. Historian Ernest M. Howse has noted that this magazine "was designed to promote interest in missionary endeavour and to publish reports of all missionary societies then active . . . . In its day it was an influential magazine especially in Evangelical circles."[32] The Missionary Register, published by L.B. Seeley, was started in 1813, approximately the same time when the Hudson's Bay Company's London Committee was beginning to externalize its changing attitudes toward religion. If little else, the

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[32]Ernest M. Howse, Saints in Politics: the 'Clapham Sect' and the Growth of Freedom (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971), p. 85.

magazine provides interesting insights into the mind-sets and attitudes surrounding the Evangelical movement. Given that some members of the Committee were influenced by this movement, the magazine is also a valuable tool for developing an understanding into some of the overt and covert forces which guided and shaped the process through which the Committee arrived at decisions.[33]

The following chapters will demonstrate that historians who have discussed the forces that were responsible for the London Committee's decision to support the efforts of organized religion in the North-West were, for the most part, correct in their understandings. Factors in the contemporary context of two geographical regions influenced the Hudson's Bay Company in its decision to grant support to representatives of organized religion in the North-West. Forces in Great Britain including anti-monopoly sentiments, Evangelicalism, humanitarianism, and missionary zeal made it economically and politically inexpedient for the H.B.C. not to support the efforts of organized religion within its territories. As will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four, it was in response to the contemporary environment in Great Britain that the London Committee changed its policy

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[33]Indeed, the Missionary Register noted the arrival of Reverend John West to the region, and "how much . . . [the "scattered tribes" of Indians] need our care." The author of the passage then noted that the H.B.C. was "very willing to assist" Reverend West in undertaking his missionary efforts. Missionary Register, January (1823): 279.

and granted such support.

In the North-West, a different set of circumstances facilitated the Hudson's Bay Company's decision to support the efforts of organized religion within its territories. As will be elaborated on in Chapter Five, between 1808 and 1819, the social context of the North-West underwent a series of important changes. The founding of an agricultural settlement at Red River brought a few European settlers to the North-West, and these settlers placed great importance upon having a representative of organized religion in their midst. In addition, numerous Canadian freemen and Métis were attracted to the new settlement, and these individuals made repeated requests that a priest be sent to the region. The settlement itself was drawn into the fur trade rivalry that existed between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company (N.W.C.); this fact served to highlight the value that religion could have as a means of social control. Finally, two Roman Catholic priests were sent to the region in 1818. These events provided an environment that the London Committee believed would benefit from the proliferation of Christianity. Thus, the context of the contemporary North-West confirmed to the London Committee that its decision in 1819 to send an Anglican clergyman to Red River, and thereby begin its active support of organized religion within the H.B.C.'s territories, was the correct course of action.

Chapter Two

The early nineteenth century witnessed the beginning of significant changes in the H.B.C.'s policy toward the amelioration of the religious circumstances which the inhabitants of the North-West experienced. In 1806, the London Committee noted in correspondence to its factories that "it would be advisable to instruct the Children belonging to our Servants in the principles of Religion & teach them from their youth, reading, writing arithmetic & accounts."[1] The London Committee believed that both contemporary factors in Great Britain and "the Nature of the Country & Service" served to preclude the sending of missionaries to the region at that time. The H.B.C.'s Directors, however, were of the opinion "that there would be lefs difficulty in sending out persons merely to serve as Schoolmasters."[2]

The London Committee's desire to provide for the religious and academic instruction of its employees' children was rooted in practical business considerations.

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[1]HBCA. B.239/b/78. York Factory to London Committee, May 31, 1806. Identical instructions were also sent to other Factories including Moose HBCA. A.6/17, Eastmain HBCA. A.6/17, Severn HBCA. A.6/17, and Churchill HBCA. A.6/17 on the same date.

[2]HBCA. B.239/b/78. York Factory to London Committee, May 31, 1806. Benjamin Harrison later elaborated that one problem with "the Nature of the Country & Service" was that "[t]he officers and Servants of the Hudson's Bay Company . . . [were] distributed over the whole extent of [the] country." Church Missionary Society Archives (CMSA.) C.1/M. "Minute of Benjamin Harrison," January 25, 1822.

As early as the mid-eighteenth century, the progeny of fur trade relationships involving H.B.C. employees were described as "pretty Numerious [*sic*]."[3] Consequently, they were becoming a drain on the financial resources of the Company. One employee, William Auld, noted that "many Servants who either retire to their country or die here do not at all provide for their children." Auld continued that "the consequence [to the Company] is all . . . [of these children] regularly and invariably must be wrought on the factories at least during childhood and thus your property is at last difsipated in unknown quantities."[4]

The London Committee believed, however, that if some of these children could be educated, they could become a

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[3]James Isham, Isham's Observations and Notes, pp. 78-79. Refer also to Andrew Graham, Andrew Graham's Observations on Hudson's Bay 1767-91, ed. Glyndwr Williams (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1969), p. 145.

[4]Auld suggested several possible reasons for the lack of concern that many H.B.C. servants exhibited for their offspring including personal incapacity, simple indifference, and the fact that no established plan to facilitate the provision of care existed. HBCA. A.11/16. William Auld to London Committee, 1811. Refer also to HBCA. A.6/20. London Committee to George Simpson, March 8, 1822. Refer to R. Harvey Flemming, ed., Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert's Land, p. 33. It is noted therein that the London Committee informed its employees in the North-West that "[w]e understand that there are an immense number of Women and Children, supported at the different Trading Posts, some belonging to men still in the Service and others who have been left by the Fathers unprotected and a burden on the Trade." Nicholas Garry, a member of the London Committee who visited the North-West in 1821, made similar comments. Nicholas Garry, The Diary of Nicholas Garry: Deputy Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, ed. W.J. Noxon (Toronto: Canadiana House, 1973), p. 67.

benefit to, rather than a financial drain on, the Company. The Committee noted that

> there are a number of Children belonging to their [, the Committee's,] Servants in Hudson's Bay a small portion of whom are brought up in their Service for want of proper Instruction in their Youth their parents not being able to allow them sufficient time or not having the means of affording them the necefsary instruction whereby they would become useful to themselves & the Company.[5]

It was the London Committee's "hope" that providing the children of its employees with religious and academic instruction "would attach them to our service & in a few years become a small Colony of very useful hands."[6] Thus, religious and academic instruction was intended to prepare the offspring of fur trade personnel for future employment with the Company.

The H.B.C.'s directors also believed that a secondary benefit of providing religious and academic instruction was that it might serve to better the Company's relations with the surrounding Native peoples. The London Committee

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[5]HBCA. A.6/17. London Committee, "School Instructions," 1807.

[6]HBCA. A.6/17. London Committee to York Council, May 31, 1806. The Committee recommended "early instruction as the most successful & the best means of implanting in the minds of the Children habits of Industry." HBCA. A.6/17. London Committee, "School Instructions," 1807. Historian Sylvia Van Kirk noted that in 1794, a large number of books were sent to Hudson's Bay. The Committee hoped that parents would instruct their offspring so that the sons might be employed in the service and that the daughters might be exposed to European culture. Sylvia Van Kirk, Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870 (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980), p. 103.

requested information about not only those children who lived "on . . . [the] establishment," but also "whether those inland would be sent down for a few years to remain at the Factory."[7] In addition, the H.B.C.'s directors asked the Factory Councils "to cultivate as much as possible an intimate connection with the Natives all over the Country & to facilitate your intercourse with them, which must of course prove advantageous to the Company."[8]

The London Committee also informed its employees in the North-West that,

> [s]hould either of the Chiefs of the Trading Tribes friendly to the Company exprefs a decided wish to intrust [*sic*] any of their Children to the Chief of the Factory for the purpose of Instruction in the objects proposed, the Committee recommend to the Council the admifsion of them.[9]

The Committee believed that "it w^{d} be a means of cultivating the Friendship & Goodwill of the Parents & Children & thereby promote very efsentially[?] the objects the Committee have in view."[10] For the most part, however, the primary recipients of the Company's academic and religious instructional efforts were to be the offspring of

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[7]HBCA. B.239/b/78. London Committee to York Council, May 31, 1806.

[8]HBCA. A.6/17. London Committee, "School Instructions," 1807.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

H.B.C. employees.[11]

The Company's employees responded favourably to the London Committee's suggestions regarding the sending of schoolmasters to the North-West.[12] Although some employees previously had failed to provide for the futures of their children, others had expressed genuine concern about the fates that might befall their progeny. Indeed, some individuals sent their children to England so that they might receive a European education.[13] The London Committee

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[11]Refer to HBCA. A.6/17. London Committee, "School Instructions," 1807, where it is noted that "[t]he Children of the Servants in actual Employ will be admitted" to the proposed schools.

[12]The H.B.C.'s employees expressed concern, however, that the instructional efforts would be focused primarily upon boys. The servants desired that "the happinefs resulting from Education & Religion should be imparted without distinction to the Children of both sexes." HBCA. B.239/b/79. York Council to London Committee, September 28, 1807. To ensure that their daughters would be exposed to European influences, the Company's servants suggested that

> Native women as attendants on these young persons seem improper--their society would keep alive the Indian language with it, its native superstition which ought to be obliterated from the mind with all pofsible care.

Ibid. Consequently, it was noted that "a female from England of suitable abilities & good moral character accompany[ing] the schoolmaster would obviate the necefsity of employing such attendants." HBCA. B.239/b/79. York Council to London Committee, September 28, 1807.

[13]For a discussion of the reasons why some of the H.B.C.'s employees desired to provide their children with a European education, refer to Jennifer S.H. Brown, Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), pp. 153-70.

noted, however, that there were "numerous instances of natives belonging to British Colonies that are in a State of Pauperism in England & consequently chargeable to Parishes where they take up their residence." Consequently, "the legislature [had] . . . turned its attention to remedy this evil." The establishment of schools in the North-West, however, would make possible the provision of a European education for the offspring of those of the Company's servants "who had not the means" to send their children to England.[14]

In the years following 1806, the Hudson's Bay Company sent books for educational purposes to its factories. Until the arrival of proper schoolmasters in the region, Company surgeons were to serve as instructors.[15] The Hudson's Bay Company sent three teachers to the North-West,[16] and by 1809, the Council at York Factory could write that

> [w]e have the pleasure to afsure your Honours that the School Establishment is proceeding under the happiest presages of Succefs--The amelioration already taken place is sufficient to justify the Hopes of the well wishers of the Institution and to fix in us a firm Belief that the Results tho distant will be eventually beneficial to your

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[14]Those individuals who possessed the financial ability to send their children to England for an education, however, could continue to do so. HBCA. A.6/19. London Committee to John Davies, May 13, 1818. Refer also to HBCA. D.2/1. London Committee to William Williams, May 25, 1820.

[15]HBCA. B.239/b/78. London Committee to York Council, May 31, 1807 and ibid., May 20, 1808.

[16]Refer to ibid., 1808. Note also C.J. Jaenen, "Foundations of Dual Education at Red River," p. 35.

honours Concerns.[17]

The Company's initial efforts to secure a pool of labour from the offspring of its employees thus appeared to be underway.[18]

While the Company's servants concurred that the contemporary environment in the North-West was not conducive to missionary endeavours, they also suggested that ultimately one day missionaries might be sent to the region. It was proposed that "[a]fter a trial of Schoolmasters more promising hopes might be entertained for the influences of the Clergy."[19] This confirmed the members of the London Committee in their opinion that, for the time-being, their efforts were best directed toward providing academic education, with instruction in Christianity being a corollary; they believed that this approach would be

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[17]HBCA. A.11/118. York Council to London Committee, September 15, 1809.

[18]The Reverend John West, who came to the region in 1820, noted, however, that the H.B.C. had sent "several schoolmasters" to the country, but that those individuals had been "unhappily diverted from their original purpose, and became engaged as fur traders." John West, The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, British North America; and Frequent Excursions among the North-West American Indians in the Years 1820, 1821, 1822, 1823 (London: L.B. Seeley and Son, 1824; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966), p. 13.

[19]HBCA. B.239/b/79. York Council to London Committee, August 30, 1806.

"beneficial to the Service in general."[20] Indeed, in 1808, the Committee reaffirmed that "we have little hopes of ever being able to engage Clergymen who would leave this Country on any terms to promote the object we have in view."[21]

Within several years, however, the London Committee's perception of the role that organized religion could play in the North-West was shifting. In 1815, Benjamin Harrison presented to the Committee "some Hints relative to the Establishment of a general School for the Instruction & Civilization of the Native Indians in the Company's Territories."[22] The London Committee responded favourably to Harrison's proposal and requested that he "lay the same before the Governor of the Company of the Society for propagating the Gospel in New England." In addition, the Committee resolved "that Mr. Harrison be fully authorized to negotiate the Businefs on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company."[23] While little came of his initial effort, Harrison was not dissuaded, and later that same year he

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[20]HBCA. B.239/b/78, London Committee to York Council, May 31, 1807. Those children who received instruction, however, were to "be christened by the Chief or other person acting in that Capacity." HBCA. A.6/17. London Committee "School Instructions," 1807. In addition, it was "particularly recommended that the Children should be taught to Read out of the Bible or New Testament." Ibid.

[21]HBCA. B.239/b/78. London Committee to York Council, May 20, 1808.

[22]HBCA. A.1/51. Minute Books, February 1, 1815.

[23]Ibid.

attempted to "procur[e] assistance to build a Church and even to endow a Minister" for the Red River colony.[24]

The London Committee's support of Harrison's proposal is significant for three reasons. First, it signified a shift in the focus of the organization's educational activities to include Indian children. Indeed, in 1816, the London Committee informed Robert Semple, who had been appointed by the H.B.C. as the Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land, that

> [w]e shall be anxious for your report as to the books or tracts you would wish to be sent for the purpose of religious instruction and we are desirous for your opinion as to the prospect of success in civilisation and converting to Christianity the children of the native Indians.[25]

Second, this reflected the increasing prominence of the religious aspect of education. Third, the support that the London Committee gave to Harrison's proposal demonstrated a new openness to the possibility of a missionary organization taking up work within the Company's territories.[26]

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[24]SP. Robert Semple to Lord Selkirk, December 20, 1815, p. 2726.

[25]Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land (AEPRL.) Carton A No. 1008 London Committee to Robert Semple, May 8, 1816.

[26]The London Committee's willingness to consider permitting religious Societies to undertake work in the North-West stemmed from three main factors. Such organizations were becoming increasingly important in contemporary British society, they could provide a trained and willing body of individuals who possessed the desire to undertake missionary tasks, and they could contribute financial support to foreign missions. These points will be

In the early 1800s, the London Committee thus believed that the "Nature of the Country & Service" in the North-West and the contemporary environment in Great Britain precluded sending a missionary to the H.B.C.'s territories. As the following chapters will demonstrate, the London Committee's decision to support the efforts of organized religion was a result of specific developments that occurred within the context of these two geographical regions. The contemporary context in British society made it politically and economically expedient for the Committee to grant such support. Furthermore, the founding and growth of the Red River colony provided an environment which the London Committee believed would benefit from the proliferation of Christianity. Consequently, existing circumstances in the North-West facilitated the London Committee's decision to grant support to such endeavours.

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elaborated upon in Chapters Three and Four.

Chapter Three

The Hudson's Bay Company began its active support of organized religion within its territories in 1819. In that year, the London Committee resolved to send Anglican Reverend John West to the region at a salary of £100 per annum. The London Committee employed West

> to be resident at the Settlement on Red River for the purpose of affording religious instruction and consolation to the Company's retired Servants & other Inhabitants of the Settlement, and also of affording religious instruction . . . [and] consolation to the Servants in the active employment of the Company upon such occasions as the nature of the Country and other circumstances will permit.[1]

When informing the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec, Joseph-Octave Plessis, of the Hudson's Bay Company's decision to send an Anglican Clergyman to the North-West, Lord Selkirk stressed that West was to provide "for the spiritual instruction of the English and Protestant colonists that are in the service of the Company."[2] John Halkett, a member of the London Committee, also emphasized to Plessis that West "had orders to confine himself to the Protestants and not to meddle in any manner with the French,

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[1]HBCA. A.1/52. London Committee Minutes, October 13, 1819. Refer also to HBCA. D.2/1. London Committee to William Williams, May 25, 1820.

[2]Lord Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, December 30, 1819 as transcribed Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, pp. 260-261.

the Indians, or the *bois brûlés*."[3] The London Committee thus intended that the Protestant inhabitants of Red River were to be the primary recipients of West's ministrations.[4] Furthermore, by the late 1820s, the Hudson's Bay Company was providing monetary and technical support to both Protestant and Catholic clergymen.[5]

The London Committee's decision to support the efforts of organized religion in the North-West reflected the fact that changes had occurred in the "Nature of the Country & Service" and in Britain. No longer did these environments preclude the London Committee sending missionaries to the North-West; rather, it had become economically and politically expedient for the H.B.C. to do so. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Five, the founding of the Red River colony facilitated the London Committee's decision by creating a circumstance which the Committee believed would benefit from the proliferation of organized religion. The decision itself, however, was made in response to forces that were present in contemporary British society.

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[3]Bishop Plessis to Father Dumoulin, April 10, 1821 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, pp. 295.

[4]As will be elaborated upon in Chapter Four, West did not hold the same objectives as the London Committee.

[5]Refer to HBCA. A.1/52. London Committee Minutes, October 13, 1819 and Father Provencher to Bishop Plessis, February 2 and 3, 1826 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, pp. 436-7. Note also E.H. Oliver ed., The Canadian North-West, I, 653.

Consequently, it will be beneficial to place in historical context those forces in British society which influenced the London Committee to change its policy toward religion.

Following the turn of the nineteenth century, the H.B.C.'s stockholders elected several individuals who were either sympathetic to Evangelicalism, or who were Evangelicals themselves, to the London Committee. Included among these individuals were Nicholas Garry, Benjamin Harrison, and Andrew Colvile. Historian Maurice J. Quinlan suggested that "Evangelicalism was more than a religious creed. For those who genuinely accepted its teachings it was a way of life."[6] Consequently, it is not surprising that those members of the London Committee who were influenced by Evangelical thought would lead the Hudson's Bay Company in new directions.

The roots the Evangelical Revival within the Church of England date to the eighteenth century. Evangelicals believed that man was a fallen being who could only be redeemed through salvation. William Romaine, who led the Evangelical Revival in London, wrote that the "corruption of our nature by the fall, and our recovery through Jesus Christ, are the two leading truths of the Christian

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[6]Maurice J. Quinlan, Victorian Prelude: A History of English Manners 1700-1830 (Hamden: Archon Books, 1965), p. 108.

religion."[7] In turn, man achieved salvation through justification by faith. One church-goer who was exposed to the preaching of an Evangelical minister wrote that

> I heard one of those preachers at our church. He preached such a sermon! It was almost an hour long, and he said downright that all unconverted people were in a state of damnation, and would go to Hell, if they did not believe on [*sic*] the Lord Jesus![8]

The true convert was held to be one who submitted to the will of God and who had faith that "through the merits of Christ his sins [were] forgiven and he [was] reconciled to the favour of God."[9]

Evangelicalism was a religion of personal conversion and salvation. As such, Evangelicals held that, because the unconverted soul was one that would be lost forever, the

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[7]William Romaine as quoted in L.E. Elliott-Binns, The Early Evangelicals: A Religious and Social Study (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), p. 386.

[8]The church-goer then went on to state:

> Truly, he set the parish in an uproar, for we are not used to such sort of preaching. Thank God for a good parson, say I; for the Sunday after, our Parson (God bless him!) preached a sermon against such doctrine . . . . He told us that we were in no danger of going to Hell, and that there was no fear of our being dammed, for we were all good Christians, if we paid everyone their own, and did as we would be done by.

As quoted in Paul Sangster, Pity My Simplicity: The Evangelical Revival and the Religious Education of Children, 1738-1800 (London: Epworth Press, 1963), pp. 19-20. Note also A. Tindal Hart, Clergy and Society 1600-1800 (London: Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, 1966), pp. 94-96.

[9]"Homily of the Church" as quoted in L.E. Elliot-Binns, The Early Evangelicals, p. 387.

spreading of their teachings was of great importance to the well-being of the individual.[10] In addition, Evangelicals placed great importance on the Bible. In the sixth of the Thirty-Nine Articles, the whole of which Evangelicals "accepted . . . as an almost perfect summary of the Faith,"[11] it was written that the

> Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed thereby as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.[12]

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[10]Refer to Missionary Register, January (1817), p. 2. Evangelicals disseminated their teachings in a variety of ways. Two of the more traditional means that they employed were preaching and personal contact. Other less traditional methods included "early-morning prayer meetings, Bible classes, 'classes for young people and enquirers', children's meetings . . . as well as meetings in various houses of the parish." Anthony Armstrong, The Church of England, the Methodists and Society 1700-1850 (London: University of London Press, 1973), p. 127.

[11]G.R. Balleine, A History the Evangelical Party in the Church of England, 4th ed. (London: Church Book Room, 1951), p. 106. George Harbidge, a schoolmaster who had been sent to Red River by the Church Missionary Society, noted that when occasion required that he fulfil the role of preacher to the region's inhabitants, "I go through the regular Morning Service, after w^{ch} I read one of the Homilies of the Church (letting the Church speak for itself)." CMSA. C.1/M. George Harbidge to the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, July 18, 1823.

[12]As quoted in L.E. Elliott-Binns, The Early Evangelicals, p. 385. The Thirty-Nine Articles "express the mind of the Church of England on questions under dispute during the Reformation." E.J. Bicknell, A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England 3rd ed. (London: Longmans, 1955), p. 17. Historian A. Tindal Hart noted that the "Evangelical revivalists . . . always adhered strongly to the Prayer Book, the Thirty-Nine Articles and the 1604 Canons." A. Tindal Hart, Clergy and Society, pp. 90-91.

Thus, the Bible was held to be the guide to correct living and the key to salvation.[13] Indeed, Reverend John West noted "that we derive all true sentiments in religious subjects from the Bible, and the Bible alone."[14] Consequently, it is not surprising that Evangelicals promoted literacy, or that they supported education.[15]

Furthermore, Evangelicals "believed that public morality depended upon private virtue. The well-being of society was [held to be] derived from the spiritual health of its individual members."[16] Consequently, Evangelicals believed that their faith was "the ultimate solution of social antipathy or social distress."[17]

The sons of William Wilberforce described the state of British Society that confronted their father when he began

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[13]As John West noted of the Bible, "[t]herein is contained the great charter of salvation, and the awful code of divine communication to the human race." John West, The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, p. 73.

[14]Ibid., p. 73.

[15]Indeed, William Wilberforce, one of the more prominent members of the soon to be discussed Clapham Sect, noted that "[i]t is only by educating our people in Christian principles, that we can hope to advance in strength, greatness, and happiness." Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (London: John Murray, 1839), V, 46. Indeed, as historian Paul Sangster notes, a "religious life was thought difficult for an illiterate." Paul Sangster, Pity My Simplicity, p. 27.

[16]Richard D. Altick, Victorian People and Ideas (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), p. 181.

[17]J.H. Plumb, England in the Eighteenth Century (London: Penguin Books, 1990), pp. 159-60.

his quest to reform Britain's morals in the late eighteenth century:

> He had been roused out of a deadly lethargy, and when he looked around him on the aspect of society, he saw how universal was the evil from which he had himself escaped. He could not wonder that the gay and busy world were almost ignorant of Christianity, amidst the lukewarmness and apathy which possessed the very watchmen of the faith . . . . . No efforts were now making [*sic*] to disseminate in foreign lands the light of Christ's gospel . . . . . [A]ll the cords of moral obligation were relaxed as the spirit of religion slumbered . . . . . There was needed some reformer of the nation's morals.[18]

William Wilberforce himself wrote that "God . . . has set before me as my object the reformation of '[my country's]' manners."[19] Wilberforce believed that "[t]he immoral man cannot be a good citizen, because [he is] not a happy man . . . [, and an] unhappy [man] wish[es] for change."[20]

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[18]Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, I, 129-130.

[19]Ibid., I, 130. Wilberforce also noted that "[t]he pillar of our greatness is raised upon that basis of all intellectual and moral improvement, the Christian religion." Ibid., V, 47. As historian John Foster noted, Evangelicals sought reform by revitalizing certain elements of British society that they perceived to be flawed. John E. Foster, "The Anglican Clergy in the Red River Settlement: 1820-1826" (master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1966), p. 13. Refer also to ibid., pp. 19-30. Note Richard Willie, "From Mission to Diocese: The Anglican Mission, Red River Settlement, 1839-49" (master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1979), pp. 4-5 and H.T. Dickinson, "Introduction: the Impact of the French Revolution and the French Wars 1789-1815," in Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815, ed. H.T. Dickinson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 18-19.

[20]Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, V, p. 451.

Consequently, he held the reformation of manners to be of great importance to the well-being and health of the nation.

Evangelicals, however, were not the only individuals who sought to address ills they perceived to exist in British society.[21] Historian Elie Halévy noted that the French Revolution served to "[open] the eyes of the gentry and the wealthy traders to the risks to which their light attitude towards religion was exposing that social order of which they were the principal beneficiaries." For many British citizens, the French Revolution not only confirmed the need to improve British morals, it also helped to stimulate an interest in, and support for, humanitarian and philanthropic efforts as methods of providing social stability in a time of turmoil.[22] As Halévy noted, "[e]ven

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[21]Indeed, although it has been suggested that Evangelical participation in, and support of, the various Societies that were created to help improve the lot of Britain's populace "far exceed[ed] any other group's," other segments of British society also took an active role in these organizations. Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians: The Age of Wilberforce (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 358. Support for the Societies spread across a broad spectrum of the British upper and middle classes and included bankers, businessmen, the High Church Party, religious dissenters, and academics. Ibid., pp. 351-3. This is not to say, however, that support for the various Societies within these segments of the population was universal. Refer to ibid., pp. 363-371.

[22]Efforts to reform British social morality took many forms, including a proliferation of Societies that were designed to address various ills that were perceived to exist in the contemporary environment. The humane treatment of animals, sabbath observance, prison reform, religious knowledge, education, and temperance were but a few of the issues to which Evangelicals and others directed their attention. Historian Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the

if a gentleman were [*sic*] personally devoid of justifying faith he respected its presence in his neighbours and encouraged it among the poor as the surest guarantee of law and order, if not salvation."[23]

By the early nineteenth century, those who sought to revitalize elements of British society were proudly espousing the benefits that their various endeavours were bestowing upon Great Britain and its populace. Indeed, Legh Richmond, an Evangelical minister, wrote in 1814 that

> [t]he public mind is gradually undergoing a great moral revolution. Christians are acquiring enlarged views of the nature of their religion, and the obligation to impart it . . . . Incalculable is the national good which is daily

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Victorians, p. 328, noted that there were

> societies to improve, to enforce, to reform, to benefit, to prevent, to relieve, to educate, to reclaim, to encourage, to propagate, to maintain, to promote, to provide for, to support, to effect, to better, to instruct, to protect, to supersede, to employ, to civilize, to visit, to preserve, to convert, to mitigate, to abolish, to investigate, to publish, to aid, to extinguish. Above all there were societies to suppress.

Refer also to Elie Halévy, England in 1815, pp. 393-7.

[23]Elie Halévy, England in 1815, p. 393. Refer also to Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, II, pp. 1-8. For an introduction into the historiography of social control, refer to Martin J. Wiener ed., Humanitarianism or Control?: A Symposium on Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Social Reform in Britain and America, Rice University Studies, 67 (1) (Houston: William Marsh Rice University, 1987). Refer also to A.P. Donajgrodzki ed., Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain (London: Croon Helm, 1977) and Martin J. Wiener, review of Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain, edited by A.P. Donajgrodzki, Journal of Social History 12 (1978-1979): 559-69.

> springing up from such exertions. It now appears capable of demonstration, that the moral wilderness will eventually blossom as the rose, through the blessing of God on Bible and Missionary institutions.[24]

Thus, those who were involved with the various Societies held that their efforts to disseminate religious knowledge and raise social morality were having a positive and identifiable effect on the British populace at both a personal and national level.

One group of Evangelical laymen which had significant impact upon the H.B.C.'s attitude toward religion in the North-West was the Clapham Sect. Dating to the late eighteenth century, the Clapham Sect founded the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) out of a desire to "more effectually . . . promote the Knowledge of the Gospel among the Heathen." The C.M.S. was to be based "on the church principle; but not on the High Church principle,"[25] and it was to be "kept in Evangelical hands."[26]

Given their understanding of the value and necessity of conversion and faith, it is not surprising that Evangelicals

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[24]Legh Richmond as quoted in Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians, p. 234.

[25]John Venn as quoted in Ernest M. Howse, Saints in Politics, p. 76.

[26]Josiah Pratt, as quoted in ibid., p. 76. The C.M.S. was founded in 1799 and was originally called the Society for Missions to Africa and the East. It became known as the Church Missionary Society in 1812. Jean Usher, "Apostles and Aborigines: The Social Theory of the Church Missionary Society," Social History no. 7 (1971): 28.

were involved in foreign missionary endeavours.[27] They believed that the unconverted throughout the world had to be saved. William Wilberforce suggested that it was

> a single instance of the Divine benevolence, that it has pleased God to render true religion not only the means of securing our future and everlasting happiness, but also of rescuing mankind from many great and present evils which are found to prevail in all countries which are strangers to Divine revelation.[28]

Others also highlighted the Evangelical mind-set in this regard. Two missionaries to Bombay noted that

> here, the eye beholds one vast multitude of immortal beings groping in heathen darkness, madly devoted to their idols, borne about by all the corrupt passions which human depravity can inflame, and busied in every thing which is hostile to the purity of the Gospel.[29]

Similarly, John West wrote that "[t]housands are involved in worse than Egyptian darkness around me, wandering in ignorance and perishing through lack of knowledge."[30]

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[27]As one contemporary of the founding of the C.M.S. commented, "[i]t will perhaps be found, that the most active friends to missions, are also the most diligent in promoting christianity at home." Thomas Scott as quoted Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians, p. 234. Refer also to A. Tindal Hart, Clergy and Society, p. 95 and N. Jaye Goosen, "The Relationship of the Church Missionary Society and the Hudson's Bay Company in Rupert's Land, 1821-1860, with a Case Study of Stanley Mission under the Direction of the Reverend Robert Hunt" (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1974), p. 23.

[28]Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, II, 462.

[29]Missionary Register, May (1817), p. 185. Refer also to ibid., p. 193.

[30]John West, The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, p. 29.

The late eighteenth century, however, was not conducive to missionary enterprises. In 1790, Charles Grant, a member of the Clapham Sect, had commented on the lack of British support for missionary endeavours. "Faint hopes," Grant wrote, "people have of missions."[31] Indeed, in 1808, the London Committee informed its employees that it was unlikely that it would send a clergyman to the North-West because it did not believe that it would be able to find an individual who was adequate to that charge.[32]

As noted previously, Evangelicals attached great importance to the Bible. As Reverend John West noted,

> the exercise of private judgement in possession of the Bible, was the birth-right of every man. Therein is contained the great charter of salvation . . . . 'A Bible then to every man in the world,' is the sentiment we would encourage.[33]

For the conversion of non-Christians, however, Evangelicals

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[31]As quoted in Ernest M. Howse, Saints in Politics, p. 70. Historian Elie Halévy noted that "[w]hen the 18th century opened and for many years to come there was not a single Protestant missionary in the entire world with the exception of the small German group of the Moravian Brethren." Elie Halévy, England in 1815, p. 389.

[32]HBCA. B.239/b/78. London Committee to York Council, May 20, 1808.

[33]John West, The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, p. 73. The British and Foreign Bible Society sent to Red River a "liberal supply" of Bibles in "several different languages" which enabled West "to circulate many copies of the Bible among the colonists, in *English*, *Gaelic*, *German*, *Danish*, *Italian*, and *French*." Italics in original text. Ibid., pp. 72-73.

believed that Bibles alone would not be enough; missionaries would also be required. A call made in the Missionary Register highlighted the important roles that foreign missionaries were expected to fulfil:

> Preachers are wanted, in the first place, to call the attention of the ignorant and careless Heathen to the Word of God--secondly, to direct his mind to such parts of the Sacred Volume as are best adapted to his capacity and circumstances--thirdly, to make explanations where the sense is not obvious--and, finally, to enforce the truths of Scripture by argument and persuasion. Without Christian Teachers, an indiscriminate distribution of the Bible, in Heathen and Mahomedan Countries, would be but little better than throwing it away . . . . [T]here is no instance on record of a Nation being evangelized by the Bible without the preaching of the Gospel. Bibles should, by all means, be circulated among the Heathen; but Ministers of Gospel should be sent along with them.[34]

Thus, many in Britain believed that foreign missionaries, the provision of education, and the distribution of Bibles were critical to the spreading of Christianity.

By 1814, the various humanitarian and religious Societies present in Great Britain contributed to a growing awareness among British Christians of an "obligation to impart" their religion to others.[35] As John West asked,

> [w]here is our humanity and Christian sympathy, and how do we fulfil the obligations which

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[34]Missionary Register, January (1820), p. 2.

[35]Reverend Legh Richmond as quoted in Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians, p. 234. Refer also to Missionary Register, January (1820), pp. 1-2 wherein a discussion of the "Duty of Christians to send forth Preachers of the Gospel, in such numbers as to furnish the means of Instruction and Salvation to the Whole World" is undertaken.

> Christianity has enforced, if we do not seek to raise these wandering heathen, who, with us, are immortal in their destiny, from a mere animal existence to the partaking of the privileges and hopes of the Christian religion?[36]

As will be seenin Chapter Four, this belief in a responsibility to disseminate Christianity to non-believers, particularly when those individuals were fellow British subjects, had a significant impact on H.B.C. policies.

By 1817, approximately 150 Protestant missionary stations existed throughout the world, and some 100 English Clergymen were undertaking their missionary duties with "zeal."[37] In addition, in 1816, British Evangelicals spent approximately £70 000 "in objects directly Missionary," and "upward" of £100 000 "in objects not directly Missionary,

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[36]John West, The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, p. 118. Refer also to Missionary Register, May (1817), p. 193. Reverends Samuel Newell and Gordon Hall, two American Missionaries, also demonstrated this sense of responsibility to spread their faith throughout the world and, in particular, to inhabitants to whom they felt a paternal responsibility. They wrote that

> the object of civilizing and Christianizing the small and scattered tribes of American Indians . . . is an object of too great importance to be overlooked, deeply interesting in itself, and presenting very peculiar claims of the consciences and the feelings of American Christians.

Ibid., p. 190. As will be seen, British citizens also felt a similar responsibility to those of their fellow subjects whom they considered to be heathen.

[37]Missionary Register, January (1817), pp. 1-2. The figure of 150 Protestant Missionary stations included nearly 120 that were maintained by "several Societies" and that were located "chiefly in British America."

but connected with the civilization and enlightening of the world."[38] As the Church Missionary Society noted in 1873, "[i]t is certain . . . . . that the commencement of the (19th) century witnessed such an outburst of Missionary zeal as was unknown before."[39] Thus, within early nineteenth century British society, there was great support for foreign missionary endeavours and for the belief of a Christian responsibility to disseminate the faith.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a series of challenges was launched against the East India Company (E.I.C.). These challenges served to demonstrate the levels of influence that Evangelical, humanitarian, anti-monopoly, and missionary sentiments had achieved in Britain. In 1793, the Clapham Sect led an effort to add certain clauses to the E.I.C.'s Charter that would provide for "religious and moral improvement" in India.[40] One

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[38]It was also noted that the listed expenditures in objects "directly Missionary" were

> far short of that which has been actually devoted to this service: as very considerable sums are contributed, in various parts of the world, to the carrying on of the work.

Missionary Register, January (1817), p. 4.

[39]"()" in original. As quoted in M.P. Wilkinson, "The Episcopate of the Right Reverend David Anderson, D.D., First Lord Bishop of Rupert's Land 1849-1864" (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1950), p. 8.

[40]It was proposed that "the directors of the East India Company should be empowered and required to send out 'fit and proper persons' to act as 'school-masters, missionaries, or otherwise'." Ernest M. Howse, Saints in Politics, p. 71.

historian suggested that the East India Company was successful in resisting these efforts because, at that time, "there was . . . positively no missionary spirit in the nation."[41] By 1813, however, the C.M.S. had existed for almost fifteen years, and there was significant support among the British populace for missionary endeavours.[42]

William Wilberforce was of the opinion that it was a "great national crime" to

> commi[t] the control of the only entrance for religious light and moral improvement into India to the Directors [of the East India Company], who are decidedly adverse to every attempt that can be made to Christianize, or raise in the scale of being, our East Indian fellow-subjects.[43]

Consequently, when efforts again were made to open India to missionary activities, Wilberforce espoused that "we are confident the friends of religion, morality, and humanity throughout the kingdom would petition" toward that end;[44] indeed, over 500 000 people signed 837 petitions.[45]

The inhabitants of Great Britain considered the people of India to be fellow British subjects; as such, they felt a

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[41]Charles Hole as quoted in Ernest M. Howse, Saints in Politics, p. 72. For an introduction into the efforts to introduce missionaries into India at this time, refer to ibid., pp. 65-94.

[42]Ibid., p. 78. Refer also to ibid., p. 88 and p. 92.

[43]Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, IV, 104.

[44]Ibid., p. 105.

[45]Ernest M. Howse, Saints in Politics, p. 92.

particular responsibility to impart to the unconverted of India the benefits of the Christian religion. Wilberforce summarized the importance that many in British society attached to opening India up to the work of missionaries:

> Animated, Sir, by this unfeigned spirit of friendship for the natives of India, their religious and moral interests are undoubtedly our first concern; but the course we are recommending tends no less to promote their temporal well-being, than their eternal welfare; for such is their real condition, that we are prompted to endeavour to communicate to them the benefits of Christian instruction, scarcely less by religious principle than by the feelings of common humanity . . . . . [A]re not the natives of India, our fellow-subjects, fairly entitled to all the benefits which we can safely impart to them? . . . . . I should deem it almost morally impossible, that there could be any country in the state in which India is proved, but too clearly, now to be, which would not be likely to find Christianity the most powerful of all expedients for improving its morals, and promoting alike its temporal and eternal welfare.[46]

Christianity, as brought to the people of India by missionaries, would not only bring eternal life to those of that nation who converted, it would also benefit their current lot.

The E.I.C., however, again opposed the proposed measures. Nevertheless, one historian noted that those who sought to open India to missionary enterprises had something on their side that they had lacked in 1793: "the militant enthusiasm of the country at large."[47] Indeed, not only

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[46]William Wilberforce as quoted in Ernest M. Howse, Saints in Politics, pp. 89-92.

[47]Ernest M. Howse, Saints in Politics, p. 92.

did significant support exist in Britain for bringing Christianity to India, the contemporary economic climate was punctuated by a great debate over the issue of free trade.[48] The struggle in 1813 resulted in victory for those who sought the opening of India. As one historian noted, not only was the E.I.C.'s trade monopoly diminished,[49] the new Charter Bill included provisions "giving the missionaries access to the Indian heathen."[50]

As will be seen in the following chapter, the environment in contemporary Britain played an important role in the formation of the London Committee's policy decisions. In addressing the various ills that they perceived to exist within British society, many Evangelical and humanitarian Societies sought to inculcate religion and morality into the populace. A great public zeal for missionary endeavours carried abroad the belief in the benefits of Christianity. In conjunction with contemporary perceptions about chartered monopolies, these forces led the Committee to support the efforts of organized religion.

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[48]Refer to Elie Halévy, England in 1815, pp. 275-2.

[49]While the Company retained a monopoly over trade with China, access to India was thrown open. Refer to Philip Lawson, The East India Company: A History (London: Longmans, 1993), pp. 140-3.

[50]Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians, p. 275.

Chapter Four

In the early 1800s, contemporary British attitud es regarding monopolies, Evangelicalism, foreign missions, and humanitarianism made it politically and economically necessary for the H.B.C. to grant support to the efforts of organized religion within its territories. The contemporary British environment further influenced the London Committee's decision to grant such support by ensuring that qualified personnel and additional financial assistance were available to assist the H.B.C. Because the London Committee was a sub-group of British society, and because it was the governing body of the Hudson's Bay Company, forces that were present in Britain had the potential to shape the policies that the Committee established for the North-West.

Historian J.M.S. Careless' metropolitan-hinterland thesis is useful in helping to understand the relationship that existed between the contemporary environments in Britain and the North-West, and the H.B.C.'s religious policy. Careless suggested that metropolitanism

> implies the emergence of a city of outstanding size to dominate not only its surrounding countryside but other cities and their countrysides, the whole area being organized by the metropolis, through control of communications, trade, and finance, into one economic and social unit that is focused upon the metropolitan "centre of dominance" and through it trades with the world.[1]

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[1]J.M.S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History," Canadian Historical Review 35, no. 1 (1954): 17.

Thus, an organizing metropolis not only had political and economic ties with a hinterland, it also had "social and cultural associations;" in addition to capital, communication, transport, and markets, a metropolis provided its hinterland with societal elements such as culture and religion.[2]

The Hudson's Bay Company functioned within a metropolitan-hinterland context. David Anderson, the Anglican Lord Bishop of Rupert's Land, alluded to the connection that existed between the metropolis of London, from where the Company's directors conducted their business, and the hinterland of the North-West. Three decades after Reverend John West arrived in Red River, Anderson cautioned that

> however so far removed, we cannot forget that the life and influence and energy of our Church, must be derived in great measure from Britain. England must still be regarded by us as the heart and centre of life, from which the blood circulates to the most distant parts of the body.[3]

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[2]J.M.S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History," p. 18. Refer also to J.M.S. Careless, "Urban Development in Canada," Urban History Review 1 (June, 1974): 9-11.

[3]David Anderson, A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, at his Primary Visitation (London, 1851), p. 10. Contemporaries were also aware that a similar relationship existed between business interests in the North-West and Britain. Refer also to Joseph James Hargrave, Red River (Montreal: John Lovell, 1871), p. 143. Historian Donald C. Masters noted, however, that "[m]etropolitan status is a relative, not absolute term as no centre has ever established complete dominance over its hinterland." Donald F. Davis, "'The Metropolitan Thesis' and the Writing of Canadian Urban History," Urban History Review 14, no. 2 (1985): 107.

Furthermore, in refining Careless' argument, historian Donald F. Davis highlighted the importance of understanding the social networks that existed within a metrcpolitan-hinterland relationship. He noted that "dominance and power . . . are attributes of elites *not* cities. Nor do cities exercise economic control; entrepreneurs and business corporations do."[4] While the London Committee established the economic and social policies that governed its territories,[5] it operated within the daily context of British society. Thus, developments that occurred in the context of the metropolis of London, had the potential to result in changes in the hinterland of the North-West; this indeed was the case with regard to the London Committee's decision to support the efforts of organized religion within its territories.

In addition to the relationship that existed between

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[4]Italics in original. Donald F. Davis, "The Metropolitan Thesis," p. 108.

[5]Although at times the London Committee was not successful in this regard, it did attempt to rectify such situations. For example, economic historians Ann M. Carlos and Stephan Nichols have noted that, when the H.B.C. experienced problems with private trade, it addressed the issue by changing its employment contract system and its social structure. Ann M. Carlos and Stephan Nicholas, "Agency Problems in Early Chartered Companies: The Case of the Hudson's Bay Company," Journal of Economic History 50, no. 4 (1990): 853-75. Similarly, the H.B.C. had originally disallowed relationships between its servants and Indian women. As noted previously, however, when the H.B.C. became aware of the fact that such connections had produced a large group of offspring, it sought to develop them into a "Colony of very useful hands."

the London metropolis and the hinterland of the North-West, the fact that the London Committee was a sub-group of British society also shaped the manner in which factors in contemporary Britain impacted on the Committee's decision making process.[6] Relative to the general population, members of the London Committee were wealthy. In addition, Evangelical thought influenced several members of the Board. Furthermore, the H.B.C. was not only a business enterprise, it was a very specific kind of enterprise, namely a chartered monopoly.

The H.B.C.'s organizational structure determined in what ways forces that were present in British society could influence the Company. The H.B.C.'s Charter laid out that the governing body of the organization, the London Committee, was to be comprised of a Governor, a Deputy Governor, and seven other individuals, all of whom were to

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[6]G. Gordon Brown has written on the subject of sub-groups and their place with in a larger society. Although Brown's work concerned missionaries as sub-groups, his general arguments can be extended to include the London Committee. Brown suggested that the beliefs and/or the behaviours of a sub-group differed from the population as a whole in one or more distinct and definable ways; and that, when they were exposed to various stimuli, sub-groups reacted in a manner that differed from the general population. Furthermore, Brown suggested that regional, ethnic, and class differences could occur within a sub-group itself. Indeed, Brown argued that missionaries were a sub-group not merely of society as a whole, but also of the religious sub-group of that society. G. Gordon Brown, "Missions and Cultural Diffusion," American Journal of Sociology 50, (1944): 214-219.

be elected annually during a meeting of the General Court.[7] In the General Court, a person or group of persons could cast one vote for every £100 of stock that they owned.[8] Moreover, in order to be elected to the Committee, one was required to personally possess "at the least two hundred poundes [of] Stocke."[9] The Company's Charter thus ensured that, in comparison to the majority of contemporary British society, the members of the H.B.C.'s governing body possessed significant wealth.[10]

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[7]Charters, Statutes, Orders in Council &c. Relating to the Hudson's Bay Company, pp. 5-9.

[8]Several individuals who possessed less than £100 each could "joyne theire respective summes to make upp one hundred poundes and have one vote joyntly for the same and not otherwise." Ibid., p. 17.

[9]The Charter also provided "that three of the Committee Shall be interchangeably varyed every yeare." E.E. Rich ed., Minutes of the Hudson's Bay Company: 1671-74 (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1942), pp. 54-55. Thus, in order to be re-elected on continuing basis, it is unlikely that individual members of the Committee, or the Committee as a whole, would support policy changes that ran drastically counter to the wishes of the H.B.C.'s voting stockholders. It should be noted, however, that contrary to the provision that "three of the Committee Shall be interchangeably varyed every yeare," between 1800 and 1827 the London Committee experienced, in general, very few changes in personnel. During this time period, most years saw either no changes in Committee members or the replacement of only one member. Refer to HBCA. A.1/48-54. Minute Books, (1799-1827) and HBCA. A.2/3. General Court Minute Books, (1824-1827).

[10]When the H.B.C.'s Charter was granted in the seventeenth century, agricultural workers, for example, received up to 5 shillings (*s.*) per week for their labours, soldiers received just over 4*s.*, and mechanics received between 6*s.* and 7*s.* Samuel Smiles, Workmen's Earnings, Strikes, and Savings (London: J. Murray, 1861; reprint New York: Garland Publishing, 1984), p. 15. By the turn of the

As noted previously, historian A.S. Morton characterized the stockholders of the Hudson's Bay Company as "for the most part rich men . . . [who] regarded the money put into the concern as an investment."[11] Consequently, Morton suggested that many of the H.B.C.'s stockholders were satisfied with what he called the "business man's religion" of "pay attention to your prayers, treat the Indians with justice and 'civility', keep the servants away from the Indian women, and sober, and the Almighty will personally see to it that the dividends will be satisfactory."[12] Because of their personal standing in British society, however, many members of the London Committee did not wish to attract negative attention to themselves. Consequently, when British society no longer would tolerate attitudes such as the "business man's religion," the Company adopted new practices and policies.

In his pamphlet "A Sketch of the British Fur Trade,"

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nineteenth century, skilled London artisans earned an average of 18*s*. per week while agricultural labourers earned on average between 10*s*. and 12*s*. James E. Thorold Rogers, Six Centuries of Work and Wages: The History of English Labour 11th ed. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912), p. 494 and p. 510. Similarly, "the wages of a good mason in London were only 16s. a week." Samuel Smiles, Workmen's Earnings, Strikes, and Savings, p. 17. To cast one vote in the General Court, a London artisan in 1800 thus would have to acquire the equivalent of over two years salary in H.B.C. stock, while an agricultural labourer would have to acquire the equivalent of over three years salary.

[11]A.S. Morton, "The Business Methods and the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company," p. 137.

[12]Ibid., p. 140.

Lord Selkirk alluded to a way in which the H.B.C.'s Charter helped to ensure that the members of the London Committee would not lead the Company along a path of behaviour that would be considered to be unacceptable given contemporary standards. Selkirk noted that the

> Board of Directors in London . . . attend to the concerns of the Company more from a principle of duty to their constituents, than from the expectation of any great personal benefit likely to arise from their exertions. Each of them individually has avocations of higher interest, than what arises from his connection with the Hudson's Bay Company. He can only therefore occasionally bestow his attention on their affairs.[13]

The members of the London Committee did indeed have considerations that extended beyond the Hudson's Bay Company. Benjamin Harrison, for example, belonged to 21 societies, was vice-president of two, was governor of six, was on the committee of two, and was the Treasurer of Guy's Hospital.[14] Consequently, Selkirk suggested that "the Directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, . . . from the circumstances of their situation, must have too much regard for their own character, to sanction their servants in acts of violence."[15] Although Selkirk's comments were directed towards accusations that had been made by the N.W.C.

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[13]Lord Selkirk, "A Sketch of the British Fur Trade," p. 79.

[14]Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians, p. 355.

[15]Lord Selkirk, "A Sketch of the British Fur Trade," p. 79.

concerning aggression on the part of H.B.C. employees, his basic contention was that, out of concern for personal appearance if nothing else, the London Committee took heed of contemporary attitudes when forming its policies.

Another factor which determined how contemporary British society impacted on the London Committee's decisions, was that Evangelical thought influenced several members of the Committee. Thus, as one might expect, some Evangelical sentiments were manifested in the North-West through the actions of those individuals.[16] In addition, those members of the London Committee who were influenced by Evangelical, humanitarian, or pro-foreign missionary sentiments were well positioned to demonstrate to the other members of the Committee how changing the Company's policy regarding the support of organized religion would be beneficial from a business standpoint.[17] It was the

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[16]Nicholas Garry played a key role in the founding of an Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the North-West. Benjamin Harrison also demonstrated his concern for the religious condition of the inhabitants of the North-West by sending Bibles to "some of the Company's Posts." John West, The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, p. 72. Harrison also contributed to the support of four Indian Children at the Red River School. CMSA. 1./M. "Memorandums and Accounts of the Church Missionary Establishment, Red River Settlement, Hudson's Bay, North America, from October 1, 1822 to May 31, 1823."

[17]Indeed, when the London Committee granted support to the agents of organized religion, it stated that such actions would benefit not only the inhabitants of the North-West, but also "the Fur Trade." HBCA. D.5/1. London Committee to George Simpson, February 27, 1822. Refer also to HBCA. A.6/20. Benjamin Harrison to John West, February 26, 1822.

principle objective of the London Committee and the Company's stockholders, as owners of a business, to make a profit. The Hudson's Bay Company, however, was a chartered monopoly, and as such, it was susceptible to criticisms that were of a specific and unique nature.

The London Committee was aware of the perceptions that the British public held with regard to chartered monopolies, and how the public and government would perceive the Hudson's Bay Company in light of these beliefs.[18] For 150 years, the Hudson's Bay Company had conducted its business in the North-West while doing little to provide for the amelioration of the religious condition of its employees or of the Native peoples. Indeed, Reverend John West noted that before the H.B.C. decided to extend "the blefsing of . . . [Chris]tianity, religion, morals, & Education" to the Indian peoples of the North-West, the Company had left these same peoples in a state of moral and religious "darkness."[19] Nicholas Garry, a member of the London

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[18]Refer to Andrew Colvile to George Simpson, March 11, 1824 as transcribed in Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire, p. 205 and London Committee to George Simpson, March 5, 1830 as paraphrased in ibid., p. 322. Note also, HBCA. A.6/20. London Committee to George Simpson, March 12, 1824. Public perceptions about the H.B.C. were important to the London Committee. Negative perceptions not only might harm the social standing of individual members, but, as the tribulations of the East India Company demonstrated, they could have disastrous consequences during debates on Charter renewal.

[19]CMSA. C.1/O. John West to Secretary of the C.M.S., August 28, 1822. While West recognized and appreciated that the H.B.C. did, at present, support the efforts of organized

Committee who visited the North-West in 1821, alluded to contemporary British attitudes regarding the state of religion within the Company's territories. Garry, who was a member of the British and Foreign Bible Society,[20] played a key role in founding an Auxiliary of that Society in the North-West. Following a council meeting at the Hudson's Bay Company's York Factory, Garry noted in his Diary that

> [t]he Readiness which was shown by every Gentleman to subscribe proves how erroneous the Opinions of People have been that there was no Religion in the Country. It proves how easily the Minds of People may be led to do what is good.[21]

Despite his satisfaction surrounding the founding of the Auxiliary Bible Society, however, and despite his assertion that the "Opinions of People" were "erroneous," Garry himself appeared to share many of those same "Opinions." Because only a "few Gentlemen" were present at the founding of the Auxiliary,[22] Garry "had wished to have introduced a Correspondence with Mr. West and through him have induced all the Officers and Gentlemen in the Company's Service to

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religion, he also noted that they had previously failed to do so.

[20]M.P. Wilkinson, "The Episcopate of the Right Reverend David Anderson," p. 29.

[21]Nicholas Garry, The Diary of Nicholas Garry, p. 92. Given that the London Committee sent Garry to oversee the coalition of the N.W.C. with the H.B.C., it is logical to infer that the "People" to whom he referred were those of Britain.

[22]Ibid., p. 92.

become Members."[23] Garry believed that having these men join the Auxiliary would benefit the North-West because it would "dra[w] their Attention to more serious Thoughts and introduc[e] in the Country religious Feelings which hitherto have been so much neglected . . . . . Indeed even in the best Hudson's Bay [men] too little Attention was given to religious matters."[24]

Furthermore, the directors of the H.B.C. could not help but be aware of the outcome of the aforementioned events surrounding the renewal of the E.I.C.'s Charter. Despite all efforts to portray the H.B.C. in a positive light,[25] negative public perceptions about chartered monopolies

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[23]Nicholas Garry, The Diary of Nicholas Garry, p. 128. Garry later reiterated that the Officers in the H.B.C.'s service "only wanted Encouragement to think rightly." Ibid.

[24]"[men]" in original. Ibid. It is likely that while some individuals donated funds to the Auxiliary out of a true desire to support the organization's goals, others did so because of Garry's presence. Indeed, as will be elaborated upon shortly, many of the Company's servants expressed concern that the entry of agents of organized religion into the North-West would harm fur trade interests.

[25]During a series of Parliamentary hearings, for example, Lord Selkirk suggested to William Wilberforce that

> tho' a spirit of narrow minded monopoly has for a long time past been supposed to characterize the HBC° not a single instance has occurred in the course of my own acquaintance with them in which they have been led by any such motive to disregard the welfare of their dependents.

SP. Lord Selkirk to William Wilberforce. July 22, 1819, p. 6341. Selkirk also inferred the same argument in his manuscript on the Red River Settlement. SP. Manuscript, n.d., pp. 12832-3.

continued to influence the London Committee's decisions. Andrew Colvile informed George Simpson, the Governor of the Northern Department, that

> [i]t is incumbent on the Company if there was no settlement to have a chaplain in their country & at least to allow missions to be established at proper places for the conversion of the Indians, indeed it w[d] be extremely impolitic in the present temper & disposition of the public in this Country to show any unwillingness to assist in such an object.[26]

The London Committee also warned Simpson that should the H.B.C. fail to provide these and similar services, "great and well merited odium will be excited in this country against the Company, which will probably produce very injurious effects, both as respects the rights and the pecuniary interests of the Company."[27] The Committee

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[26]Andrew Colvile to George Simpson, March 11, 1824 as transcribed in Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire, p. 205. Similarly, in 1830, the London Committee informed Governor Simpson that

> [a] clergyman is to be sent out by the Company as a missionary for the West Side of the Mountains at a salary of £100 per annum. He is to be stationed where we may hereafter determine, 'and we desire that measures may be concerted to carry this object into effect with the least possible delay, as we considered it a duty both owing to ourselves and the natives, in a serious point of view, and a highly expedient measure under existing circumstances in a Political light.'

London Committee to George Simpson, March 5, 1830 as paraphrased in ibid., p. 322. The H.B.C. thus was aware of the political and social environment in which it existed, and it acted accordingly.

[27]HBCA. A.6/20. London Committee to George Simpson. March 12, 1824.

recognized that "[a]ll monopolies are extremely unpopular at this time," and consequently, it informed its employees in the North-West, through Governor Simpson, that "it is for the interest of all concerned, that no just ground should be afforded for an attack upon the Company."[28]

British sentiments regarding the responsibilities of chartered monopolies were made clear in the text of An Act for Regulating the Fur Trade, and Establishing a Criminal and Civil Jurisdiction within Certain Parts of North America.[29] The Act stated that

> the Governor and Company of Adventurers trading to Hudson's Bay . . . shall also enter into such Security as shall be required . . . for the due and faithful Observance of all such Rules, Regulations and Stipulations as shall be contained in and such Grant or Licence, either for diminishing or preventing the Sale or Distribution of Spirituous Liquors to the Indians, or for promoting their moral and religious Improvement.[30]

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[28]HBCA. A.6/20. London Committee to George Simpson. March 12, 1824.

[29]The text of the Act can be found in HBCA. A.37/8. An Act for Regulating the Fur Trade, and Establishing a Criminal and Civil Jurisdiction within Certain Parts of North America. 1821. Refer also to Charters, Statutes, Orders in Council &c. Relating to the Hudson's Bay Company, pp. 93-102.

[30]Charters, Statutes, Orders in Council &c. Relating to the Hudson's Bay Company, p. 95. The London Committee thus had been legislated to act in accordance with desires that were prevalent in British society. Indeed, the H.B.C.'s directors noted that

> the Fur Trade ought to contribute £250 for the salary of a missionary and £260 for the building of a schoolhouse, as the exclusive licence to the Hudson's Bay Company requires that provision be made for the moral and religious instruction of

In noting this Act, the London Committee informed George Simpson, who in his role as the Governor of the Northern Department would be responsible "for the amelioration of the Condition of the Indians" within that region, that "[t]his is not only an obligation upon us but we are firmly convinced that in the end such measures will be beneficial to the Fur Trade."[31]

The London Committee therefore was of the opinion that given the temper of contemporary British society, it was politically and economically expedient for it to support the efforts of organized religion within its territories. While only a minority of the London Committee may have truly embraced Evangelical, missionary, or humanitarian ideals, the Committee as a whole was aware of the delicate position that the Company occupied in light of contemporary attitudes about chartered monopolies. Consequently, the London Committee decided to send John West to the Red River region.

The British public greeted with approval the Hudson's Bay Company's decision to support the efforts of organized

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the natives.

London Committee to George Simpson, March 11, 1825 as paraphrased in Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire, p. 251.

[31]HBCA. D.5/1. London Committee to George Simpson, February 27, 1822. Several months later the London Committee reemphasized to its servants that it had become "incumbent" upon the Company to abide by the terms that were laid out in the Licence. HBCA. D.4/5. George Simpson to London Committee, July 31, 1822.

religion within its territories. An article in the New Times noted that the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company "have by their interest and co-operation afforded great facilities which otherwise could not have been obtained in seeking to enlighten the natives of the vast territory of North-west America."[32] Many of the H.B.C.'s employees in the North-West, however, believed that supporting the efforts of organized religion in the region would impact negatively upon the Company's business interests.[33]

Governor George Simpson noted of Reverend John West's attempts to establish schools for Indian children, that West

> will no doubt on paper draw a very fine representation of the advantages derived therefrom, which may attract the attention of Philanthropists, but in my humble opinion will be attended with little other good than filling the pockets and bellies of some hungry missionaries and schoolmasters and rearing the Indians in habits of indolence; they are already too much enlightened by the late opposition and more of it would in my opinion do harm instead of good to the Fur Trade. I have always remarked that an enlightened Indian is good for nothing.[34]

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[32]New Times, January 23, 1824. Refer also to Missionary Register, June (1823): 279.

[33]In his journal, Reverend John West commented that many of the Company's servants believed that "the extension of knowledge among the natives . . . would operate as an injury to the fur trade." John West, The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, p. 92. Similarly, Reverend David Jones, the C.M.S. missionary who replaced West, noted that he and West had been considered "as unwelcome visitors." CMSA. C.1/O. David Jones to C.M.S., October 30, 1823.

[34]George Simpson to Andrew Colvile, May 20, 1822 as transcribed in Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire, p. 181. Simpson also noted that the H.B.C. was not a

Simpson even was wary of bringing organized religion to the North-West for the purpose of ameliorating the religious condition of the Company's servants. He suggested that the Committee's desire to have West visit York Factory "during the busiest months" would impede the Company's business operations:

> [T]he Parson will be the only idle man about the place, and he will have an opportunity of seeing the whole routine of our business which may be converted to an improper use at some future period, or he may feel it a point of Duty to give information of our immoral conduct (according to his doctrine) to people who might afterwards make a handle of it to the injury of the concern.[35]

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philanthropic organization. While the Company did engage in philanthropic exercises on occasion, acts such as providing credit, food, ammunition, and the like to individuals in need were undertaken for practical business reasons. Philanthropy was "not the exclusive object" of the Company's relationship with the Indian peoples; "to it are coupled interested motives, and . . . Beaver is the grand bone of contention." George Simpson, Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report, ed. E.E. Rich (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), p. 356.

[35]George Simpson to Andrew Colvile, May 20, 1822 as transcribed in Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire, p. 182. On another occasion, Simpson informed the London Committee that

> [i]n no other part of the Company's Territories [other than at Red River] do I consider that the presence of a Clergyman would be attended with any material advantage . . . . [?] [D]uring the busy season at York both Gentlemen and Servants are so much occupied with their various duties that very few attend the public worship and at the Wintering Grounds little benefit could be derived from his services as he could not move about from Post to Post, and at no individual Establishment in the Country are there exceeding Eight or Ten Protestants.

Thus, among some of the Company's employees, there was concern that organized religion would harm the fur trade, and, as such, should not be supported by the H.B.C. The London Committee, however, informed its servants that because of the contemporary environment in Great Britain, representatives of organized religion were a necessary addition to the society of the North-West. Moreover, they restated their position that Christianity would be of benefit not only to the social and political environments in the North-West, but also to the fur trade.[36]

The London Committee's convictions concerning the necessity and value of supporting the agents of organized religion were not lost on George Simpson. Although Simpson initially believed that the introduction of organized religion to the North-West would do little to benefit the Company's business interests, following the merger of the H.B.C. and the N.W.C., the contemporary environment in the region contributed to his decision to support such

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HBCA. D.4/7. George Simpson to London Committee, June 5, 1824. In an earlier letter to Andrew Colvile, Simpson noted that, while West's plans to "establis[h] Schools & missionaries all over the country . . . [were] very laudable objects," they could be accompanied by "very great expenses and much danger." SP. George Simpson to Andrew Colvile, September 8, 1823, pp. 8035-6.

[36]Refer to Andrew Colvile to George Simpson, March 11, 1824 as transcribed in Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire, p. 205 and HBCA. A.6/20. London Committee to George Simpson, March 12, 1824.

measures.[37] Indeed, in early 1825, he wrote that

> [t]here may be a difference of opinion as to the effect the conversion of the Indians might have on trade; I cannot however foresee that it could be at all injurious, on the contrary, I believe it would be highly beneficial thereto as they would in time imbibe our manners and customs and imitate us in Dress; our Supplies would thus become necessary to them which would increase the consumption of European produce & manufactures and in the like measure increase & benefit our trade as they would find it requisite to become more industrious and to turn their attention more seriously to the Chase in order to be enabled to provide themselves with such supplies; we should moreover be enabled to pass through their Lands in greater safety which would lighten the expence [*sic*] of transport, and supplies of Provisions would be found at every Village and among every tribe; they might likewise be employed on extraordinary occasions as runners Boatsmen &c and their Services in other respects turned to profitable account.[38]

Thus, Simpson came to support the London Committee's belief that assisting the agents of organized religion had the potential to benefit the Hudson's Bay Company's business interests.

The London Committee believed that the duties of Company Chaplain were compatible with those of a missionary, and that the promotion of Christianity and the maintenance

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[37]As will be elaborated upon in Chapter Five, Simpson's belief that organized religion could benefit both the H.B.C. and the North-West was demonstrated by his support of the Roman Catholic missions in the region.

[38]While Simpson believed that the London Committee was of the same opinion, he also noted that many of the Company's servants continued to equate missionary enterprises with the ruin of the fur trade. "George Simpson's Journal" as transcribed in Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire, p. 108. Refer also to HBCA. D.4/3. George Simpson to Benjamin Harrison, August, 1824.

of social order were complementary objectives. Thus, Reverend West was warned that, with regard to religious and educational activities, "let it never be said that to accomplish these objects, the concerns of the Company are neglected."[39] Furthermore, the Committee informed West that

> [t]he arrangements which the [Church] Mifsionary Society have entered into have our cordial concurrence, but there are so many objects requiring the attention of the Officers in the Bay, that we fear the progrefs some points may not be as rapid as you could wish.[40]

West, however, experienced difficulty in reconciling his own objectives concerning the proliferation of Christianity in the region with those of the Hudson's Bay Company.[41]

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[39]HBCA. A.6/20. Benjamin Harrison to John West. February 26, 1822. Because of the H.B.C's contributions to the mission, the C.M.S. warned West that the Company had a right to expect him to heed the objectives that it established. CMSA. C.1/L. Josiah Pratt to John West, March 8, 1822.

[40]HBCA. A.6/20. London Committee to John West, March 27, 1822.

[41]In line with his connection to the C.M.S., West envisioned his duties as being primarily concerned with Native Peoples. He wrote that

> [i]n my appointment as Chaplain to the Company, my instructions were, to reside at the Red River Settlement, and under the encouragement and aid of the Church Missionary Society, I was to seek the instruction, and endeavour to meliorate the condition of the native Indians.

John West, The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, pp. 1-2. Later, however, West noted that

> my instructions were to afford religious

Indeed, West's inability to reconcile his responsibilities as Company Chaplain and C.M.S. missionary to the satisfaction of the H.B.C. resulted in his dismissal by the Company.[42] Thus, the London Committee would support the efforts of organized religion within their territories as long as it did not harm their business interests and as long as it contributed to the social stability of the region.

The contemporary environment in Britain influenced the London Committee's decision to grant support to the agents of organized religion in a second way. As late as 1808, the London Committee had expressed the opinion that "we have little hopes of ever being able to engage Clergymen who would leave this Country on any terms to promote the object we have in view."[43] As has been noted, however, less than a decade later, missionary societies were able to provide

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> instruction and consolation to the servants in the active employment of the Hudson's Bay Company, as well as to the Company's retired servants, and other inhabitants of the settlement, upon such occasions as the nature of the county and other circumstances would permit.

Ibid., p. 30. Thus, West was aware of the duties that the H.B.C. envisioned him fulfilling.

[42]The London Committee informed West that "it is not expedient you should resume your Situation as Chaplain to the Company. HBCA. A.5/7. William Smith to John West, January 29, 1824. West's efforts "to introduce the words 'at present'" were unsuccessful. Ibid., February 11, 1824. For a more in-depth discussion of this topic, refer to John E. Foster, "The Anglican Clergy in the Red River Settlement: 1820-1826," pp. 48-54 and 75-82.

[43]HBCA. B. 239/b/78. London Committee to York Council, May 20, 1808.

numerous trained individuals who were willing to take up the task of spreading Christianity.

The London Committee was aware of the widespread support in Britain that existed for Missionary Societies, and, even before the Company engaged West, it sought to employ the resources that these organizations possessed. In 1818, the London Committee expressed "lament that they ha[d] not been able to establish a plan to promote religious instruction & Education of the Children in the Bay." When doing so, the Committee noted that "[t]hey are extremely anxious to forward the views of those religious Societies which are already established for the purpose of civilizing, Educating & converting to Christianity native Indians." Furthermore, the Committee suggested that

> [t]he Societies might be induced to send out Mifsionaries and School Masters if a sufficient number of children of the native Indians could be prevailed on to send their children but in no other case could the funds be applied. It would be of great importance to the families of Settlers & Inhabitants of the Bay if this plan could be sufficiently extended that they might have the advantage of religious instruction & education, which such Establishment might furnish under proper regulation but the first object must be the number of children of native Indians who could be received for the purpose of Civilizing and Education.[44]

Indeed, one year later, Selkirk noted "that the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, in co-operation with a society in

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[44]HBCA. A.6/19. London Committee to James Bird, May 20, 1818. Refer also to AEPRL., Carton A File 1008. London Committee to James Bird, May 20, 1818.

London interested in the missions of the Church of England, have decided to send a Protestant minister to Red River."[45]

Missionary societies also were able to provide monetary support to aid in missionary endeavours. In discussing plans "to promote education among the Natives,"[46] Lord Selkirk noted the importance that the London Committee attached to such financial assistance:

> The Hudson's Bay Company are much disposed to promote these benevolent purposes . . . [although] they cannot undertake the whole expence [*sic*] . . . . . For the salaries of the master and his assistants, and the other pecuniary expences[,] . . . funds must be procured from some other source. Expectations had been entertained that the object would be taken up by a corporation possessed of considerable revenues, which are destined to purposes of this kind, and at present not specifically appropriated.[47]

Similarly, two years after John West arrived in the region, Benjamin Harrison noted that with regard to "the plans under consideration for the extension of Religious Instruction, civilization, and education, over this immense extent of country[,] . . . the great difficulty is to provide funds."[48] The C.M.S. was willing to provide both funds and

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[45]Lord Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, December 30, 1819 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 260.

[46]Lord Selkirk, "Untitled Pamphlet on Indian Education," in The Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk, ed. J.M. Bumsted, II, 1.

[47]Ibid., p. 6.

[48]CMSA. C.1/M. "Minute of Benjamin Harrison," January 23, 1822. Refer also to Andrew Colvile to George Simpson, March 11, 1824 as transcribed in Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire, p. 205.

personnel to missionary endeavours in the North-West.[49]

Thus, because the London Committee was a sub-group of British society, and because the H.B.C. operated within a metropolitan-hinterland relationship, forces that were present in Britain had the potential to be reflected in Company policies. Indeed, Evangelical, humanitarian, missionary, and anti-monopoly sentiments in Britain made it politically and economically inexpedient for the H.B.C. not to support the efforts of organized religion within its territories; consequently, the London Committee chose to grant such support. The existence of financial and technical assistance within Britain facilitated the Company's decision.

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[49]Refer to HBCA. A.6/20. Benjamin Harrison to Reverend John West, February 26, 1822. Refer also to Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, July 1824, as transcribed in R. Harvey Flemming ed., Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, July 1824, p. 90, and George Simpson to Andrew Colvile, May 31, 1824 as transcribed in E.H. Oliver ed., The Canadian North-West, I, 259. On behalf of John West, the London Committee also tried, unsuccessfully, to gain financial support from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. M.P. Wilkinson, "The Episcopate of the Right Reverend David Anderson," p. 35 and C.F. Pascoe, Classified Digest of the Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701-1892. (London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1895), p. 177. Similarly, when Benjamin Harrison had laid his "Hints relative to the Establishment of a general School for the Instruction & Civilization of the Native Indians in the Company's Territories" before the London Committee, the board recommended that he approach the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England for assistance. HBCA. A.1/51. Minute Books, February 1, 1815.

Chapter Five

The London Committee's decision to send Reverend John West to the North-West was the result of forces that were present in British society. A change in "the Nature of the Country & Service" in the North-West that occurred between 1808 and 1819, however, facilitated that decision. The London Committee believed that the founding and growth of the settlement of Red River[1] created an environment in the North-West which would benefit from its decision to support the efforts of organized religion.[2]

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[1]The H.B.C. granted the District of Assiniboia to Lord Selkirk in 1811. E.H. Oliver ed., The Canadian North-West, I, 154-167. Settlement began in 1812 in the Red River Colony. For a more in-depth discussion of the founding of the colony, refer to A.S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71, pp. 531 ff. Refer also to Barry Kaye, "The Red River Settlement: Lord Selkirk's Isolated Colony in the Wilderness," Prairie Forum 11, Spring (1986), pp. 1-20 and Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement.

[2]In the early 1800s, the H.B.C. engaged in "an all-embracing revision of the Company's trade and practices" known as the Retrenchment. E.E. Rich, The History of the Hudson's Bay Company, II, 292. For an discussion of the Retrenchment, refer to ibid., pp. 288 ff. and A.S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71, p. 531 ff. The agricultural colony of Red River also was founded as part of the Retrenching system. The London Committee supported the founding of an agricultural colony in the North-West for a variety of reasons. It believed that the colony would improve the Company's ability to hire qualified and acceptable individuals for employment in the fur trade. HBCA. A.5/5. London Correspondence Out (General), January 10, 1811. The London Committee also believed that the settlement would help to reduce the costs that were associated with outfitting and supplying the Company's fur trade operations, that it would be of benefit to the Company's landed property rights, and that it would enable the Company to continue to supply the Indian peoples of the region (which itself had been exhausted of commonly trapped furs) with European goods. In addition, "independ[ent] of

In 1822, Benjamin Harrison noted that "[i]t has long been a subject of great anxiety to afford religious instruction, and to better the condition of the Inhabitants, and native tribes of Indians, in Hudson's Bay." Because most of the Company's employees and most of the Indian peoples were scattered throughout the North-West, the London Committee believed that it would be difficult to bring organized religion to the inhabitants of the region. The settlement of Red River, however, drew to it a relatively condensed, culturally and denominationally diverse population "of 600 or 700 settlers, besides Canadians and Half-breeds, who [were] very numerous."[3] Moreover, many of

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other advantages, [agricultural improvement] promise[d] to have a most beneficial effect in the civilization of Indians." SP. London Committee to Lord Bathurst, n.d., 1815, p. 1920. Refer also to HBCA. A.8/1. Joseph Berens to Lord Bathurst, February 18, 1815. The London Committee contended that Red River "may with liberal and proper management be rendered of great Service to the Trade of the Company." HBCA. B. 235/c/1. London Committee to George Simpson, May 24, 1823. Refer also to HBCA. A.6/19. London Committee to William Williams, February 3, 1819 and HBCA. A.6/20. London Committee to George Simpson, March 12, 1824. As will be seen, however, the London Committee was also aware that Red River had the potential to harm the H.B.C.'s business interests.

[3]CMSA. C.1/M. "Minute of Benjamin Harrison," January 25, 1822. In his unpublished M.A. Thesis, historical geographer Barry Kaye analyzed the make-up of the Red River populace. Kaye noted that processes that were both internal and external to North America populated Red River. Immigrants from outside North America could be "sub-divided according to place of origin into those from Atlantic Britain, mainly Scots but also including a few Irish, and those from Central Europe, the de Meurons and the Swiss." Kaye went on to write that "[a]mong the internal migrants the most important elements were the colonists from Lower Canada and the métis and fur traders retiring from service

these inhabitants, and many of the political and societal leaders of the region, actively lobbied for missionaries. Furthermore, given the social tensions that were present in the North-West, the London Committee recognized the value that organized religion could have as a means of social control in the region. Finally, the fact that Roman Catholic clergymen had established a mission in the North-West in 1818 also facilitated the London Committee's decision to support the efforts of organized religion.

The founding of the North West Company (N.W.C.) in the 1780s resulted in a fur trade rivalry between that organization and the H.B.C.[4] This rivalry highlighted to the London Committee the value that organized religion would be to the region and its inhabitants. The N.W.C. had been wary of Red River's purpose since the latter had been founded, and by 1815, some elements in the N.W.C. had come to "consider the settlement of Red River as likely to be

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in the Northwest." Barry Kaye, "Some Aspects of the Historical Geography of the Red River Settlement From 1812 to 1870" (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1967), p. 29. Kaye noted that "[u]ntil 1821 the Red River Colony had grown largely through the personal efforts of Lord Selkirk and by intercontinental migration." After 1821, Red River "continued to grow, apart from natural increase, by intracontinental migration, as more and more metis [*sic*] and retired servants and officers of the Company took refuge there." Ibid., p. 38.

[4]For an introduction in to the history of the North West Company and its struggle with the H.B.C. refer to Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History, pp. 56-65 and A.S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West, pp. 317-6.

injurious to their interests."[5] As a result, these individuals convinced some of the Métis and Indians who inhabited the region to launch a campaign of aggression against the colony.[6]

The H.B.C. reacted emphatically to the actions that were being taken against the settlement. Joseph Berens, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, informed the Colonial Minister, Lord Bathurst, that Red River "is in imminent danger of being destroyed, thro' the machinations of certain persons; who are endeavouring by malicious representations to inflame the minds of the Indians against the Colonists."[7] Indeed, just days earlier, Lord Selkirk expressed to the London Committee the belief that "several persons connected to the North West Company" were responsible for threats that were being made against Red

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[5]HBCA. A.8/1. Lord Selkirk to London Committee, February 14, 1815. Lord Selkirk noted that "we cannot forget the vehement antipathy to the intended settlement which was expressed as far back as the year 1811, by persons connected with the North-West company." Lord Selkirk to London Committee, February 14, 1815 as transcribed in "Papers Relating to the Red River Settlement" in British Parliamentary Papers: Papers Relating to Canada 1802-24: Colonies, Canada. No. 5. (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1971), p. 1. Refer also to William McGillivary to William Coltman, March 14, 1818 in ibid., pp. 133-43.

[6]For an introduction into the actions that were taken against Red River, refer to Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History, pp. 74-76. Friesen noted that the "campaign of terror" included "the destruction of crops, the theft of animals and implements, and the burning of some houses." Ibid., p. 75.

[7]HBCA. A.8/1. Joseph Berens to Lord Bathurst, February 18, 1815.

River, and that these individuals sought to bring about "an end to the Colony."[8]

Those individuals who expressed concern regarding the threats that the N.W.C., the Métis, and the Indian peoples posed to the colony, however, also inferred a solution. While Selkirk acknowledged that some members of the N.W.C. were honourable, he argued that others "have hardly a better notion of law or justice, than the Indians themselves," because they had, after all, "lived from early youth at a distance from the constraints of civilized society."[9] The situation thus might be improved by bringing some elements of "civilized society" to the region.[10]

Many people in the North-West believed that one constraint of "civilized society" that would bring peace to

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[8]HBCA. A.8/1. Lord Selkirk to London Committee, February 14, 1815. The Council of Assiniboia had also expressed similar concerns. It had noted "that the Halfbreeds who are without a doubt spurred on by the N.W.Co., will stick at nothing to exterminate the settlement," and that "from the connection of the Halfbreeds with the Indians, there is no saying but they might persuade them to become our enemies also." James White and Council to Lord Selkirk, June 24, 1815 as transcribed in E.H. Oliver ed., The Canadian North-West, I, 195. The North West Company denied these assertions. SP. William McGillivray to Adjutant General, June 24, 1815, p. 1577.

[9]HBCA. A.8/1. Lord Selkirk to London Committee, February 14, 1815.

[10]Refer to HBCA. B.239/b/284. William Cook to Mr. Swain, December 17, 1811.

the region was organized religion.[11] In commenting on the state of religion in the North-West, Lord Selkirk suggested not only that "[n]o means have hitherto been taken to instruct the Natives in their moral & religious duties," but also that "even the Europ[ns] seem almost to have forgotten that they are christians [*sic*]." Selkirk noted that "[i]n these circumstances the assistance of an intelligent & zealous missionary would be of great importance."[12] Lord Selkirk informed Bishop Plessis that he was "fully persuaded of the infinite good which a zealous & intelligent ecclesiastic might effect among these people, among [whom] . . . the sense of religion is now almost entirely lost." Selkirk added that "it would give me very great satisfaction to co-operate to the utmost of my power in so good a work."[13] Indeed, in addition to making repeated requests

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[11]The North West Company also was willing to support the agents the organized religion because it believed that organized religion would help to bring stability and peace to the North-West. Refer to Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, August 25, 1820 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, pp. 274-5 and Father Provencher to Bishop Plessis, January 15, 1819 as transcribed in ibid, p. 193.

[12]SP. Lord Selkirk to Bishop Latrobe, October 10, 1816, p. 2807.

[13]SP. Lord Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, April 4, 1816, p. 2164. Refer also to Belleau Papers (BP.) Lord Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, April 4, 1816 and BP. Lieutenant Colonel Deschambeault to Plessis, January 9, 1817. Indeed, Selkirk's brother-in-law, John Halkett, who was also a member of the London Committee, acknowledged that the former "sen[t] for Catholic priests [and] no doubt intended that they would be for the purpose of instructing the Catholics of the region, and above all the Canadian *métis*." John

for Bishop Plessis to send a Roman Catholic priest to the Red River region,[14] Selkirk also attempted to secure a Presbyterian minister for those inhabitants who were of that denomination.[15]

Miles MacDonell, the Governor of Assiniboia, also believed that a clergyman would be a valuable addition to the settlement of Red River. In 1812, he noted that the new agricultural colony "must . . . immediately have a priest, & he ought to be an examplary [*sic*] steady character, such a one will be of very good advantage." In support of this, MacDonell wrote of Charles Bourke, the Roman Catholic priest who was originally to accompany the settlers to Red River, that "he can be of no service here particularly in the infancy of the Settlement & I hope your Lordship [Selkirk] will not be in haste to send him out to us."[16] MacDonell wanted a representative of organized religion for reasons

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Halkett to Bishop of Juliopolis, August 10, 1822 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 358.

[14]Refer, for example, to Georges Deschambault to Bishop Plessis, January 23, 1817 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 18.

[15]Refer, for example, to SP. Red River Settlers to Lord Selkirk, July 30, 1819, p. 6378 and Alexander Ross, Red River Settlement, pp. 30-31. Selkirk thus viewed the promotion of organized religion in the North-West as having social and political utility. Consequently, he attempted to assist both Catholics and Presbyterians in obtaining a minister.

[16]SP. Miles MacDonell to Lord Selkirk, July 4, 1812, p. 416.

that ran deeper than mere appearance; the chosen individual would have the task of instilling in the new colony a sense of religion and MacDonell did not believe that Bourke was capable of filling this role.[17]

MacDonell believed that a strong religious presence was required if the colony was to be successful. "[T]here cannot be any stability," he wrote, "in the Government of State or Kingdom unless Religion is made the 'corner stone'."[18] Thus, despite his disappointment with Bourke, MacDonell, who himself was a Catholic, maintained a goal of making "the Catholic Faith the prevailing Religion of the establishment."[19] To this end, in 1815, MacDonell requested that Bishop Plessis send a missionary to Red River "to give spiritual assistance to a great number of Can^{ns} who have established themselves there & who have lead a

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[17]MacDonell did not believe that Bourke possessed the qualities necessary to minister to the inhabitants of the fledgling colony. He noted of Bourke that "[h]e has no sway over his flock & religion is turned to ridicule among strangers." SP. Miles MacDonell to Lord Selkirk, July 4, 1812, p. 416. MacDonell also characterized Bourke as "irregular & eccentric in his conduct as a clergyman." Ibid., as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 5, footnote 7.

[18]As transcribed in the BP. Miles MacDonell to Bishop Plessis, April 4, 1816.

[19]Miles MacDonell had commented to Plessis about "bringing out along with me the first year a Priest from IRELAND" and "the unfortunate result of that first attempt." Ibid.

wandering life in the manner of the sav[s]."[20] MacDonell also believed that as the population in and around Red River continued to increase, so too did the need for the amelioration of the religious condition of the region's inhabitants. MacDonell informed Plessis that

> [o]ur spiritual wants increase with our number; we have many catholics [*sic*] from Ireland and Scottland [*sic*], and besides the Canadians already with us . . . . . [t]here are Hundreds of free Canadians wandering about our Colony, who have families with indian [*sic*] women, all of whom are in the most deplorable want of spiritual aids. A vast religious harvest might also be made among the natives around us.[21]

From the time of his initial involvement with the settlement, Miles MacDonell thus supported, and actively campaigned for, the introduction of organized religion to the Red River region.[22]

Robert Semple, who for a short period of time was the Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land, also believed that the presence of organized religion was important to the success

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[20]Miles MacDonell as paraphrased by Lord Selkirk. SP. Lord Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, April 4, 1816, p. 2164.

[21]As transcribed in BP. Miles MacDonell to Bishop Plessis, April 4, 1816. Benjamin Harrison would later note that Red River was a desirable location to build a Protestant Church because settlement served to concentrate a large populace in one locale. The fur trade, on the other hand, distributed officers and servants "over the whole extent of [the] country." CMS. C.1/M. "Minute of Benjamin Harrison," January 25, 1822.

[22]MacDonell acknowledged that Lord Selkirk supported his efforts to secure a Roman Catholic clergyman for the Colony. BP. Miles MacDonell to Bishop Plessis, April 4, 1816.

of the Red River settlement. Like MacDonell, Semple was

> convinced that no Colony nor any Country can prosper without a strong religious principle and that in the present weakness of Human nature this principle cannot be maintained without a strong mixture of the Alloy of miserable human feelings and views.[23]

Unlike MacDonell, Semple recommended caution in having a Roman Catholic clergyman minister to the inhabitants of the North-West. He suggested that "wherever circumstances will admit of it I should always wish to see established the purer and simpler rites of our own Church."[24] Semple, however, did take into consideration the denominational makeup of the region. Thus, he wrote that "[i]n the present state of things a Catholic Clergyman would be of infinite service both Moral & Political among the Canadian Freemen scattered about here without a Priest or Religion at all."[25] While he would have preferred to have had a Protestant clergyman undertake a mission to the North-West, Semple conceded that the denominational make-up of Red River implied that a Roman Catholic priest would be a valuable asset.

Samuel Gale, Lord Selkirk's counsel, perhaps best

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[23]SP. Robert Semple to Lord Selkirk, December 20, 1815, p. 2726.

[24]Ibid. Historian George Bryce noted that Selkirk was a member of the Church of Scotland. George Bryce, The Life of Lord Selkirk: Coloniser of Western Canada (Toronto: Musson, 1912), p. 65.

[25]SP. Robert Semple to Lord Selkirk, December 20, 1815, pp. 2726-7.

summarized the attitudes that those who were involved with running the colony expressed regarding the benefit that organized religion would be to the region. Gale suggested that

> [t]o enlarge upon the benefits to be expected from the settlement of resident clergymen in that country would be superfluous. If in countries where the inhabitants enjoy the advantages of an established government and a regular administration of the laws, the influence of religious institutions be requisite for the well being of society, such influence must be far more essential, and humanly speaking, far more beneficial where the advantages of a Government and of laws are as yet unknown.[26]

The social and political leaders of the colony thus actively lobbied for an individual who could inculcate morality and religious principles into the inhabitants of the Red River region. They believed that an agent of organized religion would be a valuable tool for social control and that such a person could do only good in the region.

Although there is no definitive evidence to support the contention that Lord Selkirk's opinions regarding the importance of organized religion to the North-West influenced the London Committee to change its policies, Selkirk was well positioned to make his views known to the H.B.C.'s directors. In response to accusations made by the North West Company against the H.B.C. and the settlement of Red River, Joseph Berens, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay

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[26]Samuel Gale to Bishop Plessis, January 29, 1818 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 23.

Company, had attempted to downplay Selkirk's connection to the organization. Berens informed Lord Bathurst that Selkirk "is, in no respect, their [the London Committee's] Servant, nor holds any Commission under them."[27] While this was indeed true, at a personal level Selkirk was related through marriage to two members of the London Committee, he possessed a large amount of Company stock, and he was a key source of information for the H.B.C. regarding the settlement of Red River.[28] Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that Selkirk made the London Committee aware of the value that he believed organized religion would be in the context of the North-West, and that the London Committee took these comments into consideration.

As both had been appointed to their positions in the North-West by the Hudson's Bay Company, Robert Semple and Miles MacDonell occupied positions which allowed them to convey their convictions directly to the London Committee. As Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land, Semple had "paramount

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[27]HBCA. A.8/1. Joseph Berens to Lord Bathurst, February 6, 1817.

[28]Selkirk was a brother-in-law to Andrew Colvile and to John Halkett, both of whom were members of the London Committee. Refer to Lord Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, December 30, 1819 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 260 and Lord Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, June 6, 1818 as transcribed in ibid., p. 113. Colvile and Halkett were also executors of Selkirk's estate. Refer to E.H. Oliver ed., The Canadian North-West, I, 209 and A.N. Thompson, "John West: A Study of the Conflict Between Civilization and the Fur Trade" Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society 12, September (1970): 44.

authority over the whole of the Company's territories in the Hudson's Bay." As Governor of Assiniboia, MacDonell had "the same power" except "while the Governor-in-Chief [was] . . . actually present."[29] As is the case with Selkirk, a direct correlation between the opinions that MacDonell and Semple held as to the role that organized religion could play in the North-West and the H.B.C.'s decision to send Reverend West to the region has yet to be corroborated. It is likely, however, that their beliefs confirmed to the London Committee that its decision to offer support to the agents of organized religion would benefit not only the H.B.C.'s business operations in the North-West, but also the social and political environments of the region.

The fact that many of the inhabitants in and around Red River supported the idea of, and actively lobbied for, the sending of a missionary to the area also facilitated the London Committee's decision to grant support to the efforts of organized religion. The individuals of various denominations were aware that, in their contemporary environment, the proliferation of organized religion could be an effective means of ensuring peace and prosperity. The aggressions that had been directed against the colony led

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[29]Hudson's Bay Company "General Court Minutes," May 19, 1815 as transcribed in E.H. Oliver ed., The Canadian North-West, I, 193-4. Upon Semple's death, MacDonell noted that he was "the only person having regular authority from the Company." Miles MacDonell to Donald MacDonell, September 11, 1816 as transcribed in ibid., p. 194.

some settlers to leave the region permanently. Other settlers, however, agreed to remain if Selkirk met several conditions, one of which was that "[t]hey were to enjoy the services of a minister of religion, who was to be of their own persuasion."[30]

Alexander Ross, a contemporary historian who came to Red River somewhat more than a decade after the colony was founded, commented that the "emigrants, it must be remembered, were all of Presbyterian communion."[31] Consequently, Ross suggested that the arrival of James Sutherland marked "the sunrise of Christianity in this benighted country." Although Sutherland was not an ordained minister, he was characterized as a "pious and worthy man, who held the rank of elder in the Presbyterian church, [and] was appointed to marry and baptize."[32]

Presbyterian settlers demonstrated the level of support

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[30]Alexander Ross, Red River, p. 30.

[31]Ibid., p. 31. This statement was not entirely true, for many individuals of Catholic denomination were included among the earlier European emigrants. The body of settlers who arrived in 1815, however, were mainly Presbyterians. Ross referred to this group as the Sutherland Scots.

[32]Ibid., p. 31. Governor Semple also praised James Sutherland as one "who acts as Clergyman to the Colony and who I conceive has rendered most essential service by preserving alive in all their strength the religious feelings of the Settlers." Semple bestowed this praise despite his belief that Sutherland "perhaps" was a "Bigot." SP. Robert Semple to Lord Selkirk, December 20, 1815, pp. 2725-6. Sutherland was appointed to the Council of Assiniboia on May 10, 1815. Miles MacDonell to Lord Selkirk, September 18, 1815 as transcribed in E.H. Oliver ed., The Canadian North-West, I, 194.

that they were willing to give to secure a minister when, in 1819, 21 individuals who believed that "the Earl of Selkirk is about to send a clergyman of the Church of Scotland to this country for our instruction & comfort" signed on agreement "to contribute" to the support of that minister. The 21 signatories "agree[d] to afford him every assistance in our power, in building a house, and church, & likewise in the spring, and fall, to render him any other service which our means will allow."[33] Thus, the Presbyterian inhabitants of Red River were willing to do whatever was within their power to secure a representative of organized religion who was of their own denomination.[34]

The Roman Catholic inhabitants of the Red River region also desired that representative of organized religion be sent among them. In 1817, they petitioned Bishop Plessis to send a priest to the region. The inhabitants stated that

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[33]Underlined in original. SP. "Agreement by Red R. Settlers to Contribute for Minister," July 20, 1819, p. 6378.

[34]Moreover, some of the Protestants in Red River were willing to seek religious amelioration from the Roman Catholic clergy. In 1821, Father Dumoulin informed Bishop Plessis, that "[m]ost of the Protestants who live here have taken pews in the [Roman Catholic] church for their children, who are being brought up as Catholics." Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, June 5, 1821 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 310. Refer also to Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, March 20, 1822, as transcribed in ibid., p. 342, wherein Dumoulin notes that "[a]ll the new Swiss settlers, with the exception of seven, are Protestants. Many of them are quite willing to allow their children to be brought up Catholics."

> there is a Christian population established in this part of the country . . . ; that this population is composed in part of Canadians, who, having been formerly engaged in the service of traders and having finished the term of their engagements, are known by the name of free Canadians; and in part of new colonists, natives of different countries of Europe . . . . . That nearly all the Christian population, free Canadians as well as new colonists [the Swiss and the DeMeurons], are of the Roman Catholic religion. That all is now peaceful here, and that the undersigned firmly believe that with the services of a Catholic priest nothing will be lacking to render the present tranquility durable, and to preserve in the future the happiness of the country.[35]

Furthermore, the inhabitants believed that had the Métis, "the children of Christians born in this country," been raised in an environment that taught "duty toward God and society," the outrages that they committed against the settlement would not have occurred.[36]

The Métis themselves also sought to have a representative of organized religion sent among them to ameliorate their religious condition. Samuel Gale noted that

> [o]n my leaving Red River last summer various individuals of the class commonly Known by the name of half breeds or bois brulés, the sons of Roman Catholics by Indian women expressed to me an earnest desire that some Priests of the Religion of their fathers should become residents in that Country to instruct them in the principles of

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[35]"Petition of the Residents of the Red River Colony" to Bishop Plessis, n.d. 1817, as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, pp. 16-17.

[36]Ibid., p. 17.

Christianity.[37]

Gale went on to note that

> [t]his desire was warmly repeated by a number of the white people Roman Catholics at that place of whom some were of the class usually called Free Canadians & others were Colonists more recently arrived.[38]

Thus, those who petitioned to Plessis believed that representatives of organized religion would be valuable and effective forces of social control. They argued that not only could a clergyman have prevented many of the disturbances that had occurred in previous years, but that he would be able to ensure a peaceful future for the region. As Samuel Gale summarized, the inhabitants of the area desired a clergyman "not only as a benefit to which as christians [*sic*] they are entitled, but as a means of introducing the influence of religion and the principles of morality and peace throughout the country."[39]

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[37]SP. Samuel Gale to William Coltman, January 1, 1818, p. 4303.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Samuel Gale to Bishop Plessis, January 29, 1819 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 23. The importance of having a resident clergyman was reconfirmed by Bishop Provencher who, in response to the possible re-establishment of Pembina, wrote that a "priest in their midst would keep them there, and would persuade them to settle down and farm, and above all would improve their morals." Bishop Provencher to Bishop Plessis, August 8, 1825 as transcribed in ibid., p. 433. As the Governor of Assiniboia, Donald MacKenzie, noted that to ensure peace in the region, "[o]rder and religion . . . [were] to be held in veneration." Donald MacKenzie to George Simpson, July 27, 1823 as transcribed in Frederick Merk ed., Fur Trade and Empire, p. 198.

The belief in the importance of bringing the presence of organized religion to the Red River region extended beyond the boundaries of the North-West. Individuals in Montreal also were willing to subscribe to an effort

> which alone seemed calculated to introduce permanently the principles of peace & order into regions so extensive & remote, & to deffuse [*sic*] the light & consolations of religion over those parts of his Majestys [*sic*] dominions into which his influences have never penetrated.[40]

Thus, among individuals both within and without the Red River region, there existed a widespread belief that active organized religious endeavours could not but help the developing society of the North-West.[41]

In response to numerous requests that a Roman Catholic clergyman be sent to the Red River region, Bishop Plessis

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[40]Samuel Gale to William Coltman, January 1, 1818 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 20. Gale elaborated to Plessis the value that he believed organized religion could be to Red River:

> If in countries where the inhabitants enjoy the advantages of an established government and a regular administration of the laws, the influence of religious institutions be requisite for the well being of society, such influence must be far more essential, and humanly speaking, far more beneficial were the advantages of a Government and laws are as yet unknown.

Samuel Gale to Bishop Plessis, January 29, 1818 as transcribed in ibid., p. 23.

[41]As was noted in Chapter Four, however, many of the H.B.C.'s employees believed that permitting the agents of organized religion to enter the region would be harmful to the fur trade. Given the contemporary context in the North-West and in Great Britain, the London Committee disagreed.

acknowledged that

> [n]o one is more convinced than I of the incalculable benefits that might result from the establishment of a permanent mission in that place, which up to now has been abandoned to all the disorders that ignorance and irreligion foster.[42]

Consequently, he promised to send "[n]ot one, but two missionaries" to the region.[43] To support sending these missionaries to the North-West, Plessis opened a subscription to pay for "the cost of their trip and a small living expense."[44]

Those in the Red River region who were of Catholic denomination lent their support to the drive for funding, as did "a number of Protestants."[45] In addition, Lord Selkirk believed that if the efforts of those missionaries were made "known in England, assistance could be secured that would prove a surer support in the establishment of the mission." He noted to Bishop Plessis that

> [t]here are in England many Catholics of very distinguished families, and I have no doubt that one could also find Protestants who would pride

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[42]Bishop Plessis to Samuel Gale, February 11, 1818 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 24.

[43]Bishop Plessis to Lieutenant Colonel Deschambault, January 23, 1817 as transcribed in ibid., pp. 18-19.

[44]What money was left over could "be used to establish the mission and to construct a chapel, a presbytery, and other buildings." Bishop Plessis to Samuel Gale, February 11, 1818 as transcribed in ibid., pp. 24-25.

[45]Bishop Plessis to the Clergy of Canada, March 29, 1818 as transcribed in ibid., p. 39.

> themselves on maintaining a mission of this kind, as soon as they were assured of the good that will result from it.[46]

Thus, Selkirk believed that in England too he could gain interdenominational support for a Roman Catholic mission in the North-West.[47] In 1818, Fathers Provencher and Dumoulin took up residence in the region and organized Christian religion, in the form of Roman Catholicism, had arrived in the North-West.[48]

It is likely that the entry of Roman Catholic priests into the region also facilitated the London Committee's decision to support the efforts of organized religion. In 1815, Governor Semple had warned of the dangers that were

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[46]Lord Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, October 17, 1818 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, pp. 162-3. Refer also to Bishop Plessis to Lord Selkirk, October 26, 1818 as transcribed in ibid., p. 164.

[47]Bishop Plessis also drew attention to the fact that Protestants outside of Red River were willing to contribute to the Roman Catholic mission in the North-West. Plessis appeared to do so, however, in an attempt to promote greater contributions from Catholics. Indeed, he wrote to the Clergy of Canada that "I have a deep confidence that Catholics will be eager to surpass them [those Protestants who contributed to the subscription] in an undertaking looking to the gradual spread of our holy faith over the immense western region." Bishop Plessis to the Clergy of Canada, March 29, 1818 as transcribed in ibid., p. 39.

[48]As outlined by Bishop Plessis, the first objective of the Roman Catholic mission was to bring Christianity to the Indian peoples; the second was to reclaim lost Christians of European descent. The two priests were instructed to preach and inculcate the gospel at every opportunity, as such was believed to be the best way to achieve the desired objectives. BP. Instructions pour MM. Joseph Norbert Provencher et Joseph Nic. Sev. Dumoulin, April 20, 1818.

inherent to the situation that the London Committee now faced. He had suggested that if a Roman Catholic priest alone was sent to the North-West, "the simple rites of the Protestant Church will have no chance among the Natives here and Catholicism will have another extensive Country added to its Empire."[49] In 1822, Benjamin Harrison also warned that

> [t]he European population, for the want of religious instruction, may be considered as Heathen! The women and children are certainly such! There, together with the children educated in the Indian School, unlefs a Church be provided, will form part of a Catholic congregation.[50]

Consequently, the concern that most of the North-West might be converted to Catholicism, combined with the state of intolerance that existed between some British Catholics and Protestants[51] and the influence that Protestant Societies

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[49]SP. Robert Semple to Lord Selkirk, December 20, 1815, p. 2726.

[50]CMS C.1/M. "Minute of Benjamin Harrison," January 22, 1822. Refer also to Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, June 5, 1821 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 310.

[51]Lord Selkirk had commented on the attitudes that some Catholics and Protestants in Britain held about each other:

> [I]n the British realm . . . there are many priests animated more by a partisan spirit than by religion. They do not know how to nurse the devotion of their parishioners in any way other than by making them hate all those of a different faith . . . . . This heedless conduct has done much to rekindle the spirit of intolerance among their Protestant compatriots, and nothing has militated so forcefully against the efforts that have been made and that are still being made in the British Parliament for the repeal of discriminatory laws against the Catholics of England and especially of Ireland.

such as the C.M.S. possessed within British society, likely confirmed the London Committee in its decision to send a Protestant minister to the region.

Events subsequent to the merger of the H.B.C. and the N.W.C. in 1821 validated the London Committee's belief that supporting organized religion in the North-West could ensure peace and safety in the region. The merger resulted in a redundancy of a number of positions in the fur trade, and the H.B.C. was forced to lay off numerous employees.[52] Consequently, the London Committee noted that

> [i]t has become a matter of serious importance to determine on the most proper measures to be adopted with regard to the Men who have large families and who must be discharged, and with the numerous half breed Children whose parents have died or deserted them. These people form a burden which cannot be got rid of without expence [*sic*]; and if allowed to remain in their present condition they will become dangerous to the Peace of the Country and the safety of the Trading Posts.[53]

The London Committee believed that organized religion was a

Lord Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, December 30, 1819 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 261.

[52]London Committee to George Simpson, March 8, 1822 as transcribed in R. Harvey Flemming ed., Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, p. 313.

[53]HBCA. D.5/1. London Committee to George Simpson, February 27, 1822. More directly, the Committee noted that "[i]t is both dangerous and expensive to support a numerous population" of women, children, and newly laid off employees "in an uneducated and Savage Condition." London Committee to George Simpson, March 8, 1822 as transcribed in R. Harvey Flemming ed., Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, pp. 33-34.

possible solution to this situation. It noted that

> [i]t will therefore be both prudent and oeconomical [*sic*] to incur some expence [*sic*] in placing these people where they may maintain themselves and be civilized & instructed in Religion. We consider these people ought all to be removed to Red River where the Catholics will naturally fall under the Roman Catholic Mifsion which is established there, and the Protestants and such Orphan Children as fall to be maintained and clothed by the Company, may be placed under the Protestant Establishment, and schools under the Rev[d] Mr. West.[54]

The Company thus expected that the agents of organized religion would imbue a sense of religion and civilization in the populace of the North-West; it believed that the missionaries would work with the inhabitants of the region to "improve their morals" and to "enlighten their minds."[55]

By the late 1820s, the Hudson's Bay Company was providing monetary support to both Protestant and Roman Catholic clergymen.[56] The H.B.C. decision to support the Roman Catholic mission, however, arose not because of the contemporary context in Britain, but because the Roman Catholic missionaries were achieving identifiable results in the North-West. In describing the character of many of the

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[54]HBCA. D.5/1. London Committee to George Simpson, February 27, 1822.

[55]George Simpson to London Committee, August 5, 1822 as transcribed in R. Harvey Flemming ed., Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, p. 360.

[56]The H.B.C. had granted technical support to the agents of both denominations for several years. Refer to Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, August 24, 1823 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 413.

inhabitants of the region to Andrew Colvile, Governor George Simpson noted that "their habits are most vicious: they have not exactly committed Murder or Robbery but the next thing to it and frequently threaten both so that the well disposed feel themselves in a continual danger."[57] Indeed, another contemporary suggested that unless "prompt Measures [were] . . . adopted, . . . the Colony must become the Receptacle of a lawless Banditti and a most dangerous Thorn in the Side of the Hudson [*sic*] Bay Company."[58] As such, and given the denominational makeup of the North-West, the London Committee believed that the Roman Catholic priests' efforts to bring morality and enlightenment to their followers were important to the preservation of "the Peace of the [Red River] Settlement and safety of the [surrounding] Trading Posts."[59]

Indeed, by 1821, the London Committee acknowledged the

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[57]Simpson also "had a great deal of conversation, on this subject," with Nicholas Garry, a member of the London Committee who visited the North-West in 1821. Garry concurred with Simpson's interpretation of the situation. George Simpson to Andrew Colvile, September 8, 1821 as transcribed in R. Harvey Flemming ed., Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31, p. 394. Garry's account of his journey is contained in W.J. Noxon ed., The Diary of Nicholas Garry.

[58]Nicholas Garry [?] as quoted in Nicholas Garry, The Diary of Nicholas Garry, p. 127.

[59]George Simpson to London Committee, July 31, 1822 as transcribed in R. Harvey Flemming ed., Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31, p. 354. Refer also to BP. Instructions pour MM. Joseph Norbert Provencher et Joseph Nic. Sev. Dumoulin, April 20, 1818.

contribution of the Roman Catholics to the well being of the Red River region. John Halkett informed Plessis that

> no one is more fully sensible than I am of the good which has already arisen from the Roman Catholic mission in that quarter, with respect particularly to the class of persons who had repeatedly been employed to drive away the colonists.[60]

In 1824, Governor Simpson expressed similar sentiments when he informed Benjamin Harrison that

> I have much pleasure in saying that the Gentlemen of the Catholic Mifsion have conducted themselves with great propriety throughout the year, confining their attention entirely to the object thereof in which they are most zealous and their expectations productive of much good: they have great influence over their numerous followers.[61]

Thus, in recognition of the "laudable and disinterested conduct" of the Roman Catholic Mission, and its contribution towards ends that were in "the best interests of the Settlement and of the country at large," the York Council recommended "to the Honble. Committee that a stipend of £50 p. Annum be given towards . . . [the] support [of the Mission], and that an allowance of Luxuries be annually

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[60]John Halkett to Bishop Plessis, June 26, 1821 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, p. 312.

[61]HBCA. D.4/3. George Simpson to Benjamin Harrison. August ?, 1824 A month earlier, Simpson expressed similar comments to the entire board. Refer to HBCA. D.4/7. George Simpson to London Committee. June 5, 1824. Note also Bishop Provencher to Bishop Plessis, June 12, 1825 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, pp. 428-429 and Father Dumoulin to Bishop Plessis, January 6, 1821 as transcribed in ibid., p. 287.

furnished for its use from the Depot."[62] Thus, while the contemporary environment in the North-West had facilitated the London Committee's decision to support Protestant missionary efforts, it also was responsible for the Committee's decision to grant financial support to the Roman Catholic mission.

In 1818, the London Committee was faced with a social context in the North-West that differed greatly from that of 1808. The founding and growth of Red River had attracted a denominationally heterogeneous body of European settlers, Canadian freemen, and Métis who actively lobbied for the amelioration of their religious condition. Red River exacerbated the fur trade rivalry between the N.W.C. and the H.B.C., drew the ire of the Métis, and raised concerns about the intentions of some of the local Indian peoples. This social and political environment further confirmed the London Committee's belief that the proliferation of organized religion would be of benefit to the region. In

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[62]York Council Minutes, July 2, 1825 as transcribed in R. Harvey Flemming ed., Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31, p. 120. Bishop Provencher noted that this resolution was "sent to England for approval," and that Governor Simpson had expressed astonishment that the Roman Catholic mission could accomplish so much good "with so little means." Bishop Provencher to Bishop Plessis, February 2 and 3, 1826 as transcribed in Grace Lee Nute ed., Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, pp. 436-437. The London Committee assented, and similar contributions were made in subsequent years. Refer, for example, to York Council Minutes, June 26, 1826 as transcribed in R. Harvey Flemming ed., Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31, p. 156.

1818, two Roman Catholic priests, who were supported by the contributions of both local and non-local Catholics and Protestants, entered the region. The arrival of Fathers Provencher and Dumoulin signified that the "Nature of the Country & Service" had changed, and that, at least in the region surrounding Red River, it had ceased to be unconducive to the efforts of organized religion. Thus, while the contemporary environment in Britain led the London Committee to support the efforts of organized religion, the contemporary environment in the North-West facilitated that decision. Moreover, once the London Committee established a policy of support, the North-West assumed a more important role in shaping that policy.

Chapter Six

Historians who have touched on the Hudson's Bay Company's decision to grant support to the efforts of organized religion within its territories often have noted that the decision marked an epoch in the history of what was to become the Canadian West. These same authors, however, often have failed to discuss in any detail the forces which were responsible for the London Committee's change in policy, and they have provided little documentary evidence to support their conclusions. The previous chapters have demonstrated that historians who have discussed the forces that lay behind the London Committee's decision to support the efforts of organized religion within its territories were, for the most part, correct in their understandings. Factors in the contemporary context of two geographical regions served to influence the Hudson's Bay Company in its decision to grant such support.

Because the Hudson's Bay Company conducted business operations in the North-West within a metropolitan-hinterland relationship, and because the London Committee was a sub-group of British society, forces that were present in British society had the potential to influence the policies which the London Committee established for its territories. Within Britain, the Evangelical and humanitarian movements had contributed to a growing sentiment in support of foreign missions. The strength that

this pro-missionary sentiment had attained in British society was demonstrated in the 1810s when access to India was thrown open and the East India Company's trade monopoly, for the most part, was brought to an official end. The London Committee was aware that British Evangelicalism, humanitarianism, and missionary zeal, in combination with public hostility toward chartered monopolies, made it economically and politically expedient for the Hudson's Bay Company to support the efforts of organized religion within its territories. Consequently, in response to the contemporary environment in Great Britain, the London Committee decided to alter its policy and grant such support.

The Hudson's Bay Company's decision to grant support to the efforts of organized religion within its territories was facilitated by the contemporary environment in the North-West. Between 1808 and 1819, the social context of the North-West underwent a series of important developments which resulted in changes to the "Nature of the Country & Service."[1] These developments provided an environment which the London Committee believed would benefit from the proliferation of Christianity and confirmed its decision to send a Protestant clergyman to Red River and thereby begin its active support of organized religion within its

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[1]HBCA. B.239/b/78. London Committee to York Factory, May 31, 1806.

territories.

The founding of an agricultural settlement at Red River brought a few European settlers to the North-West, and these settlers placed great importance upon having a representative of organized religion in their midst. In addition, the settlement attracted numerous Canadian freemen and Métis, and these individuals made repeated requests for a priest to be sent to the region. Moreover, Red River's political and social leaders believed that a strong religious foundation was necessary to ensure the success and safety of the colony, and these leaders had the means and the opportunity to make their views known to the London Committee. That the settlement itself was drawn into the fur trade rivalry that existed between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company highlighted to the London Committee the value that religion could have as a means of social control. The entry of two Roman Catholic Priests into the North-West in 1818 demonstrated to interested observers that the "Nature of the Country & Service" was no longer hostile to the spread of organized religion. Finally, given the contemporary attitudes that British Catholics and Protestants held about each other, the entry of the Roman Catholic Priests also likely facilitated the London Committee's decision to grant support to a Protestant Clergyman.

Over the past two decades, everyday life in fur trade

societies has become of increasing interest to historians.[2] The nature of the metropolitan-hinterland relationship between the North-West and Britain and the policies that the London Committee established with regard to organized religion, the subject of this thesis, raises several interesting questions in terms of the Committee's other areas of interest. How did the metropolitan-hinterland relationship influence the London Committee's other policies? Did the impact that British society had on the London Committee's decision making processes change over time, and if so, how and why? What degree of responsibility did the Hudson's Bay Company feel toward ameliorating the social and living conditions of its servants and the Indian peoples in the North-West? Was this sense of responsibility based on an altruistic concern for the well-being of these people or was it rooted in practical business considerations? These subjects have been addressed in the literature but perhaps, as with the subject of religion, scholars could profitably revisit these issues.

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[2]Refer, for example, to Michael Payne, The Most Respectable Place in the Territory and Sylvia Van Kirk, Many Tender Ties.

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